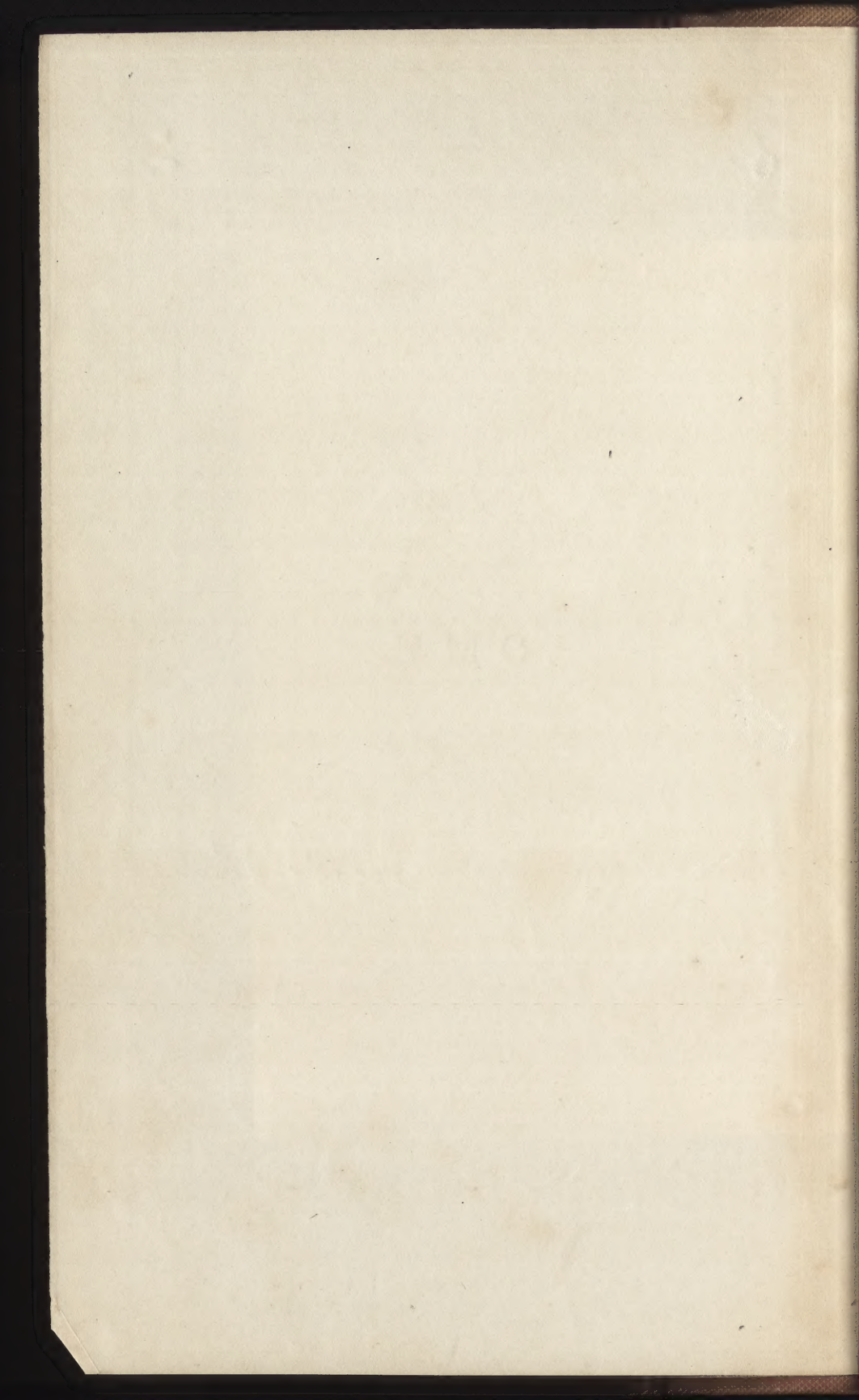


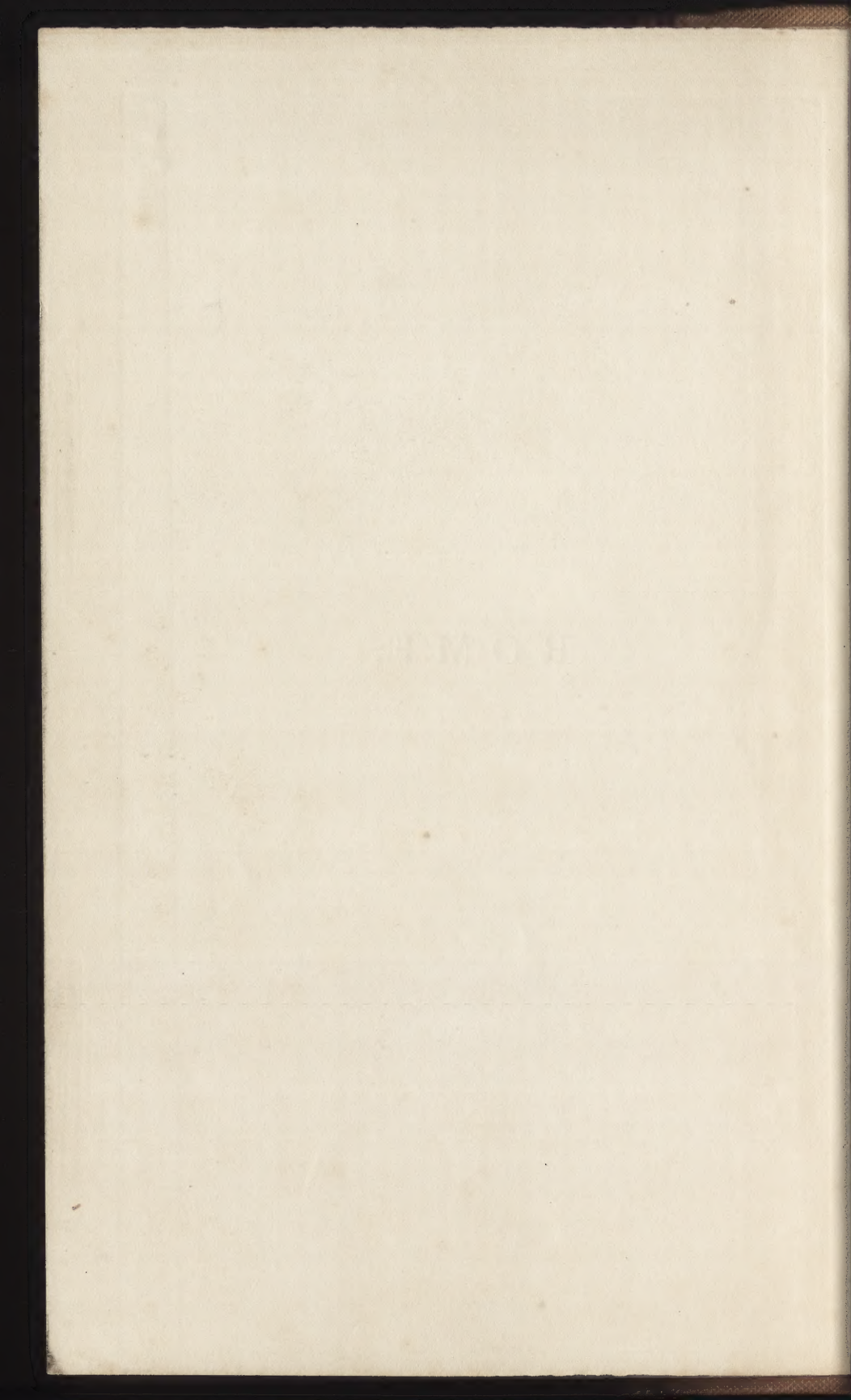
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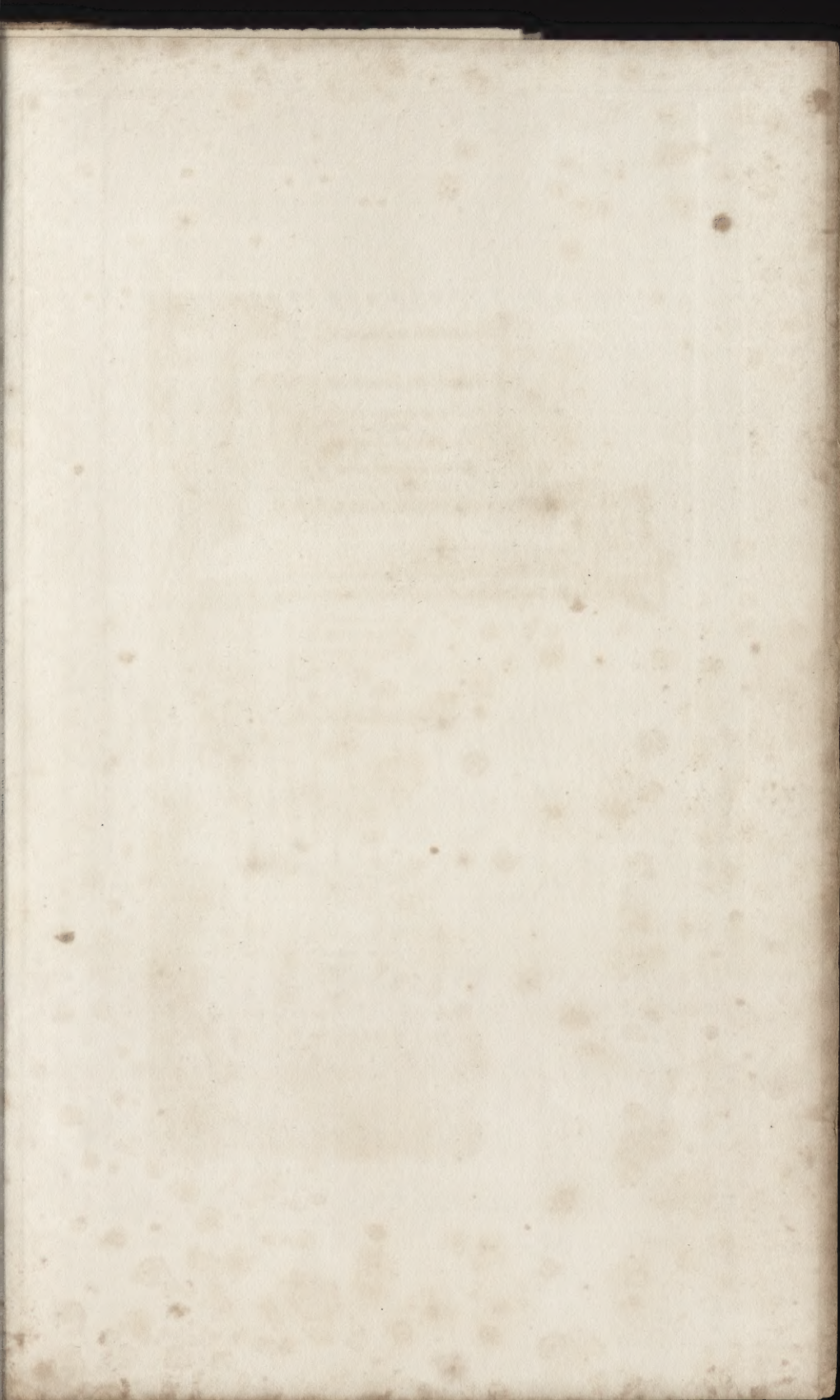




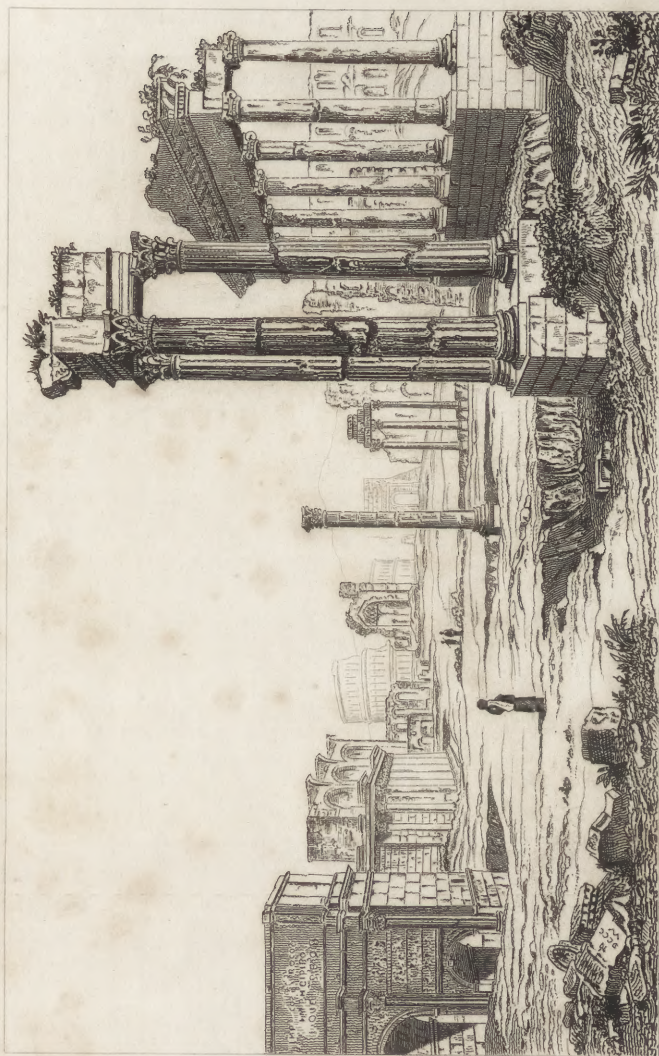
R O M E.







ROME AS IT BECAME.



Alas ! the lofty City ! and alas !  
The trebly hundred triumphs !



R O M E,

AS IT WAS

UNDER PAGANISM,

AND AS IT BECAME

UNDER THE POPES.

"Ages and realms are crowded in this span."

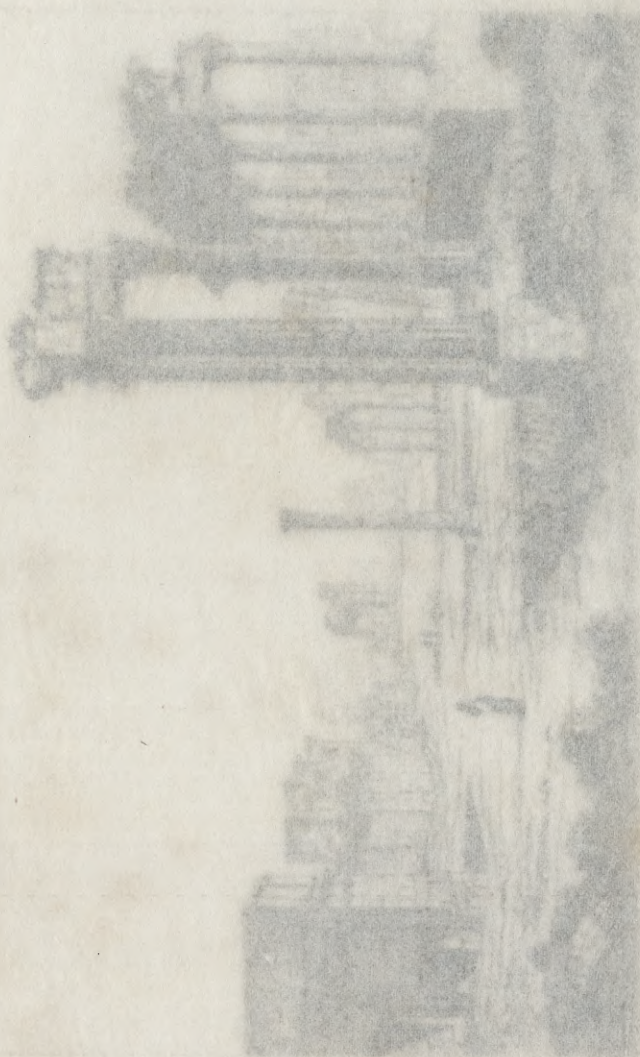
VOL. II.

LONDON:

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MDCCCKLIII.

HOUSE AND IN DECOR



THE HOUSE OF COMMONS



R O M E,

AS IT WAS

U N D E R   P A G A N I S M,

AND AS IT BECAME

U N D E R   T H E   P O P E S.

"Ages and realms are crowded in this span."

VOL. II.

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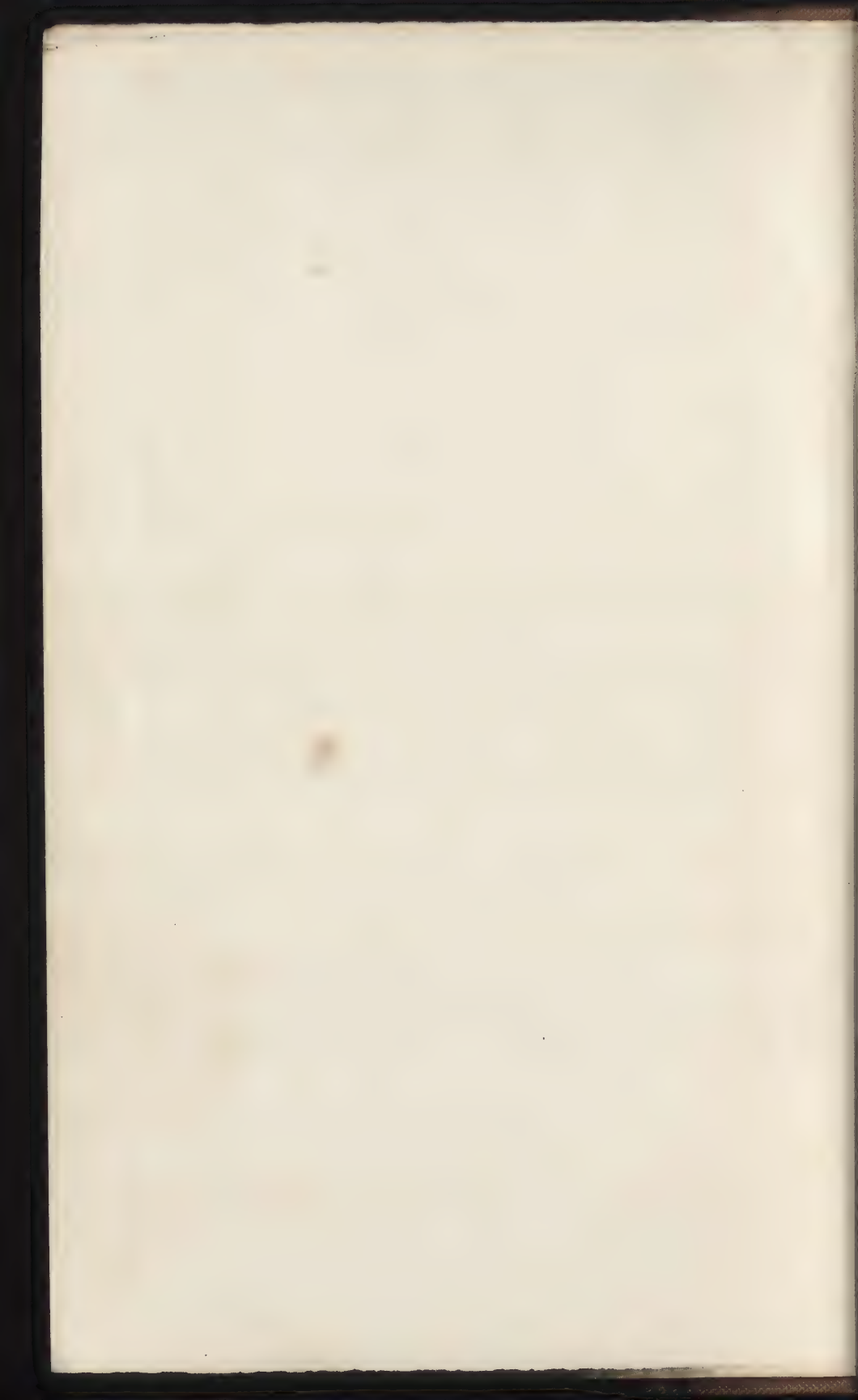




## BOOK IV.

“ Je vois la religion chrétienne fondée sur une religion précédente, et voilà ce que je trouve d'effectif.

“ Je ne parle pas ici des miracles de Moïse, de Jésus-Christ, et des apôtres, parcequ'ils ne paraissent pas d'abord convaincans, et que je ne veux mettre ici en evidence que tous les fondemens de cette religion chrétienne qui sont indubitable, et que ne peuvent être mis en doute par quelque personne que ce soit.”—*Pensées de Pascal*, par. ii., art. xvii., ch. ix.





# R O M E.

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## BOOK IV.

### CHAPTER I.

“ And forasmuch as I suppose some strangers, who happily shall chance to read these writings, may wonder what should be the reason that when my style is diverted to show those things that were done in Rome, I relate nothing but of seditions, taverns, and such like base matters, I will summarily touch the causes hereof.”—*Ammian. Marcel.* l. xiv. ch. 5.

BUT the fall of the empire, at this crisis, would have entailed irreparable injury on the church.

Persecuted for three centuries without being overcome or disheartened; gaining force from its own losses, and established with immovable firmness, by the very means which, if it had been a mere human institution, were the best calculated to subvert it; it is true, that Christianity had come out resplendent from every species of trial that could put its divinity to the test; but it is equally true, that it was not yet prepared to meet the anarchical transition-state, in which the destruction of the Roman world was to involve it. To complete the equipment of this ark, to be burdened not only with the treasures of redemption, with the pledges and hopes of immortality, but also with the principles by which the new social universe that was to spring up under its auspices was to be formed on the ruins of that old incorrigible one, so soon and completely to be swept away, an interval of tranquillity and freedom was requisite and indispensable.

Not that the deposit of the faith required to be augmented ; no, St. John, the last of the apostles, had left it complete ; after his demise, not an apex or iota could be added to it, without violating its integrity. But to bar the success of forgeries in after ages, and to secure the currency of the great dogmas of Christianity, when the mere local monuments and reminiscences of its Divine origin should have passed away ; it was expedient that they should be stamped by the authority of the assembled churches ; that the dispersed traditions should be collected while the echoes of the apostolic preaching was, as it were, still audible, and the succession of witnesses, ordained, and instituted, and initiated by them, was still unbroken in so many provinces where it was soon to be interrupted. The canon of the sacred Scriptures was to be determined amidst an incredible mass of adulterated and apocryphal copies ; their meaning, where litigated, to be defined ; their genuine spirit to be illustrated by the writings of saints, formed in the hereditary schools of the apostles. The principles of church government, and of general discipline, but little needed, or called into operation during the rudimental epoch, when all was fervour and devotedness amongst pastors and people, the majority of whom had made the most trying sacrifices in embracing Christianity, were now to be thoroughly ascertained, and set in full activity. Whatever had hitherto been left loose, or exposed to doubt or discussion, was now to be made fast by definitions, and bound up and secured in creeds ;—that nothing might perish in the tremendous concussions that were at hand, or be swept away during the dark and tempestuous time that was before the church.

It was expedient for the complete triumph of religion, and for the conversion of the incredulous, that the wild beasts—the powers of persecution—should be withdrawn for a while, within their dens, and the Christian fathers permitted to rise up on the arena ; and, under the gaze of the Roman world, be afforded an opportunity to expound the morality, define the



tenets, and vindicate by their eloquence the rites and practices of that same faith, which they had already so amply proved to be Divine by their heroism and unconquerable patience. Myriads who still hesitated and kept aloof, through doubt, or pusillanimity, or pride, were ready to hail Christianity with enthusiasm, could they but once behold it rising from the catacombs, as its Author had arisen from the grave. Nor until this was effected, could the triumph of the Crucified be said to be complete.

His cross was still to be set in the diadem of the Cæsars, who had so long and cruelly warred against it; to be planted on the Capitol, hailed as the sign of their redemption by the same senate and Roman people who had so repeatedly blasphemed it; to be emblazoned on the arms and standards of the legions, whose iron might had been wielded for its destruction. Here was the last sign reserved by Divine longanimity for idolatrous and bloodthirsty Rome; and the judgments ready to deal upon her proud walls and trophies, which she deemed eternal, the same retribution, that had laid the haughty Babylon, and the headstrong Jerusalem in ruins, were now suspended above her head; while there was displayed for her conversion an exhibition of Christ's Divinity the most astonishing, and, at the same time, the best calculated that could be imagined for making an impression on the Roman mind.

From the conquest of Macedonia by Emilius Paulus, the inhabitants of Rome had enjoyed the privilege of exemption from the taxes; but the barbarian emperors, in prosecuting their designs against the empire and its ancient capital, as before stated, had no idea of respecting this immunity; and the commissioners of Galerius already began to make an inquisition as to the amount of property, and to count the heads of the Roman people, with the view to the levying of a poll-tax. Steeped as they were in degeneracy, the old Roman spirit was roused once more to resist the insolence of the uncouth barbarian, who presumed to offer

this indignity to the ancient and deified queen of empire. Besides, the love of gold had long engrossed the love of country, and every other exalted passion that of old had swayed the Roman breast. The plebeian orders rose with fury. Even the patricians, immersed as they were in voluptuousness, and alike oblivious of country and honour, were startled into activity by the invasion of their properties. They were joined by the feeble remains of the Prætorian guards.

The first object of this new-born enthusiasm was to expel from Italy its foreign tyrants; the next, to elect a prince, who, by the place of his residence, and by the maxims of his government, might once more deserve the title of Roman emperor.\* Their choice fell upon Maxentius, the son of Maximian, the elder, by whose tyranny and rapaciousness they were speedily involved in miseries more intolerable than those from which they had expected to escape.

“While the Gallic provinces, under the sway of Constantine, enjoyed as much happiness as the condition of the times was capable of receiving, Italy and Africa groaned under the dominion of a tyrant, as contemptible as he was odious. The zeal of flattery and faction,” continues Gibbon, “has indeed too frequently sacrificed the reputation of the vanquished to the glory of their successful rivals; but even those writers, who have revealed with the most freedom and pleasure the faults of Constantine, unanimously confess that Maxentius was cruel, rapacious, and profligate. He had the good fortune to suppress a slight rebellion in Africa. The governor and a few adherents had been guilty; the province suffered for their crime. The flourishing cities of Cirta and Carthage, and the whole extent of the fertile country, were wasted by fire and sword. The abuse of victory was followed by the abuse of law and justice. A formidable array of sycophants and informers invaded Africa; the rich and the noble were easily convicted of a connexion

\* Gibbon, ch. xiv. vol. ii. p. 63, 64.



with the rebels ; and those among them, who experienced the emperor's clemency were only punished *by the confiscation of their estates.*"

The plight to which he had reduced the capital was no less deserving of compassion. The wealth of Rome was plundered, by ministers skilled in all the arts of rapine, to supply the tyrant's prodigality. It was under his reign, the method of extracting a *fee gift* from the senators was first invented. When every other pretext for robbery was exhausted, impeachments for treason were resorted to. "Moreover," says Eusebius, "'tis impossible to enumerate how many slaughters were committed of those that were senators, to the end a seizure might be made of each person's estate ; infinite numbers of them being put to death, at sundry times, for various crimes framed against them."\*

Not content with despoiling the nobility of their lives and properties, Maxentius rioted in the dishonour of their wives and daughters.† Any show of opposition to his brutality, on the part of husbands or of parents, provoked the heaviest vengeance. The dungeons of Rome were crowded with the most dignified matrons and noblemen. As to the middle class of citizens, they suffered from a lawless soldiery the same injustice and abominable treatment the aristocracy endured from the emperor. He not only connived at the tumult and violence of his troops, but even cheered them on to every licentious outrage, and to commit wholesale slaughter on the people.

One day, when the Temple of Fortune had taken fire, a soldier, in passing by, made a jest of the goddess, and was instantly fallen on, and murdered in the forum by the superstitious multitude. The news flew like lightning to the camp or barrack, between the Nomentan gate and Diocletian's baths ; and the

\* Life of Constantine, book i. ch. 35.

† Eusebius's Life of Const. book i. ch. 34 ; Ecclesiastical History, viii. 14 ; Gibbon, ch. xiv. p. 77.

Prætorians, rushing to arms, soon inundated the forum and the streets of the city with Roman blood.\*

Spies and assassins ranged through all Italy ; a word, a look, a sigh, might be treason. The people fled in every direction to the most sequestered places ; and whole cities and districts were left desolate. Famine was added to crown these scenes of misery, because all the corn was seized and hoarded up by the tyrant for his meditated attack on Gaul ; and, in his desire to secure the success, or discover the issue of this enterprise, he had recourse to the most atrocious and abominable arts. " Sometimes," says Eusebius, " he caused the wombs of pregnant women to be ripped open ; otherwhile searching into the bowels of new-born infants. He also sacrificed lions, and performed some other horrid rites ; for he hoped, by these proceedings, he should obtain victory."†

\* Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, book viii. ch. 14 ; Life of Const. book i. ch. 35 ; Zos. xi. 15 ; Aurel. Victor. de Cæsar. p. 175.

† Eusebius's Life of Const. book i. ch. 36.

## CHAPTER II.

“Christus purpureum gemmanti textus in auro  
Signabat LABARUM, clypeorum insignia Christus  
Scripserat, ardebat summis crux addita cristis.”

*Prudent. adv. Symmach. l. i.*

“The foolishness of God is wiser than men : and the infirmity of  
God is stronger than men.”—*St. Paul, 1 Cor. i. 25.*

SUCH was the miserable state of the Romans, and of the empire at large, when a standard, that had never appeared before at the head of the legions, was seen advancing over the summit of the Cottian Alps. This was the Labarum. It is thus described by Eusebius, who saw it with his own eyes, and heard its history from the emperor Constantine himself.

“A very long spear,” he says, “overlaid with gold, had a piece like a sail-yard laid athwart it, framed in fashion of a cross. Above, on the very top of the spear, was fixed a crown made up of precious stones and gold ; and, inserted in this crown, was the monogram or symbol of the saving name ; to wit, two Greek letters, representing the name of Christ, (written thus—*ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ*—in Greek characters.) The monogram, or symbol, being formed by writing the two first letters, as it were, in a cypher, after this fashion, ✠, (or something like it.) Moreover, from the cross-piece fixed athwart the spear, there hung a banner or flag of purple tissue, studded all over with precious stones, which dazzled the eyes of the beholders with the splendour of their rays ; and being interwoven with much gold, presented those who viewed it with an inexpressible kind of beauty. This flag hung at the crosspiece, had a length exactly equal to its breadth.



But the upright staff of the spear was of very great length, and on its upper part, under the trophy of the cross, and at the very top of the flag, embroidered with a variety of colours, it bore a golden picture, or medallion, of the pious emperor, as far as his breast, and also medallions of his children.”\*

“The safety of the Labarum,” says Gibbon, “was entrusted to fifty guards of approved honour and fidelity; their station was marked by honours and emoluments; and some *fortunate accidents* soon introduced an opinion, that as long as the guards of the Labarum were engaged in the execution of their office, they were secure and invulnerable amidst the darts of the enemy. The most formidable enemies of Constantine felt and dreaded the power of this consecrated banner, the sight of which, in the distress of battle, animated the soldiers with an invincible enthusiasm, and scattered terror and dismay through the ranks of the adverse legions.”†

The adoption of this standard by Constantine, while still a pagan, occurred as follows.

Perceiving that war was inevitable with Maxentius, who had made all his preparations for invading Gaul, Constantine determined to anticipate invasion, by attacking the tyrant in his own territory; and with this view prepared to lead his army across the Alps. But the troops, and his most experienced officers—“nearly all his counts and dukes,” says a contemporary, “not only murmured, but distinctly declared their fears that the enterprise was desperate.” And certainly there were fearful odds against it. The troops of Maxentius, composed in great part of his father’s

\* Life of Constantine, book i. ch. 30, 31.

† Gibbon, chap. xx. vol. ii. p. 446. The derivation and meaning of the word Labarum, or Laborum, which is applied by Gregory Nazienzen, Ambrose, Prudentius, and others, still remains totally unknown. See Ducange, in Gloss. Med. et Infim. Latinitat. sub voce Labarum, and Godefrey, ad Cod. Teodos. tom. iii. p. 143. Cardinal Baronius, A. D. 312, No. 25, gives specimens of the Labarum from ancient coins, &c.

veterans, long inured to war and victory, and of the Prætorian guards, amounted to 170,000 foot, and 18,000 cavalry, or nearly 200,000 men; while 25,000 horse and foot according to Lebeau, 40,000 according to Gibbon, was all that Constantine could muster for this expedition; for this was all that could be spared of his entire force of 90,000 men, after placing sufficient garrisons in Britain and along the ever-menaced frontier of the Rhine. Thus, according to one account, there were eight to one; according to the most partial account, there were four to one against him.

Again, the emperor Daza, or Maximin, in the East, was in league with Maxentius, who also calculated on purchasing the favour of Licinius, or at least of his legions, who might either invade Gaul, denuded of troops, or, pouring in through the Julian Alps, fall on the rear of Constantine, in case he should attempt to march on Rome. Finally, two other emperors, with far more numerous armies, had been recently defeated in this same enterprise. Galerius had not been able to force his way further than Narni, in the Apennines, and Severus, in attempting to form the siege of Rome, had lost his army and his life.

It was in this crisis of his affairs, according to Eusebius, that Constantine bethought of addressing his supplications to the only God, "entreating Him, that whoever he was, he would manifest Himself to him, and reach out his right hand to his assistance in his present emergencies.

"Whilst the emperor," continues Eusebius, "was putting up these prayers and earnest supplications, a most wonderful sign, sent from God, appeared; which, had any other person given a relation of it, would not easily have been received as true. But since the victorious emperor himself told it to us, who wrote this history, a long while after, namely, at such time as we were vouchsafed his intimacy and converse, and confirmed his relation with an oath, who will hereafter doubt of giving credit to his narrative, especially since its truth was attested by succeeding events?"

"About the meridian hours of the sun, when the day was declining towards the west, he said he saw, with his own eyes, the trophy of the cross in the heavens, placed over the sun, made up of light, and bearing an inscription in these words:—

‘BY THIS CONQUER;’

and that at the sight thereof, an amazement seized both him and his army who followed him, as he was on his march, and were spectators of the portent.”\*

"Moreover, he began, as he said, to ponder with himself what the meaning of this apparition should be; but whilst he was revolving it in his mind, and very intent upon it, night came on; when, as he slept, the Christ of God appeared to him, bearing that sign which had been shown him in the heavens; and ordered him to get a standard made in imitation of that which he had seen, and use it as a salutary defence in his engagements with his enemies.”†

The breasts, before desponding, now bounded with enthusiasm. The disproportion of their numbers, the fearful odds against the enterprize were forgotten; and before the court of Maxentius had received any certain intelligence of his departure from the banks of the Rhine, Constantine and his legions were winding down the Italian side of Mount Cenis, with the Labarum glittering in the van.‡

However, the city of Susa, situated at the foot of that mountain, strongly fortified and garrisoned, blocked up the pass, and prepared to check all further progress. But the impatience of Constantine's troops disdained the tedious forms of a siege; a place that seemed impregnable was carried in the first assault; and, having saved the city from flames, which had spread during the attack, and having won all hearts by his clemency, he advanced into the plains of Turin, where he was expected by a formidable army under the lieutenants of Maxentius.

\* Life of Constantine, book i, ch. 28.

† Ibid, ch. 29.

‡ "Probabilmente sulla prima vera."—*Murat. Annali d'Italia*, A. D. 312.



His army, which far outnumbered that of Constantine, was in great part composed of heavy cavalry of a most formidable description—the horses as well as men being clothed in complete armour, the joints of which were artfully adapted to the motions of their bodies.

“The aspect of this cavalry,” says Gibbon, “was formidable, their weight almost irresistible; and as, on this occasion, their generals had drawn them up in a compact column, or wedge with a sharp point, and with spreading flanks, they flattered themselves that they should easily break and trample down the army of Constantine.” These iron masses, however, were scattered and driven under the walls of Turin, where few of them escaped the victors, as the city gates were closed against them in their flight. Turin submitted to the conqueror, as did the other towns and cities between the Alps and the Po, with, perhaps, the exception of Vercelli. His entrance into Milan was a triumph, in which all orders hailed him as their deliverer.

“From Milan to Rome, the Emilian and Flaminian highways offered an easy march of about four hundred miles; but though Constantine was impatient to encounter the tyrant, he prudently directed his operations against another army of Maxentians, who, by their strength and position, might either oppose his progress, or, in case of a misfortune, might intercept his retreat. Ruricius Pomponianus, a general distinguished by his valour and ability, had under his command the city of Verona, and all the troops that were stationed in the province of Venetia. As soon as he was informed that Constantine was advancing towards him, he detached a large body of cavalry, which was defeated in an engagement near Brescia, and pursued by the Gallic legions as far as the gates of Verona.

“The necessity, the importance, and the difficulties of the siege of this city, immediately presented them-

selves to the sagacious mind of Constantine.\* It was accessible only by a narrow peninsula towards the west, as the other three sides were surrounded by the Adage, a rapid river which covered the province of Venetia, from whence the besieged derived an inexhaustible supply of men and provisions. It was not without great difficulty, and after several fruitless attempts, that Constantine found means to pass the river at some distance above the city, and in a place where the torrent was less violent. He then encompassed Verona with strong lines, pushed his attacks with prudent vigour, and repelled a desperate sally of Pomponianus. That intrepid general, when he had used every means of defence that the strength of the place or that of the garrison could afford, secretly escaped from Verona, anxious not for his own but for the public safety. With indefatigable diligence he soon collected an army sufficient either to meet Constantine in the field, or to attack him if he obstinately remained within his lines. The emperor, attentive to the motions, and informed of the approach of so formidable an enemy, left a part of his legions to continue the operations of the siege, whilst, at the head of those troops on whose valour and fidelity he more particularly depended, he advanced in person to engage the general of Maxentius.

“ The army of Gaul was drawn up in two lines according to the usual practice of war; but their experienced leader perceiving that the numbers of the Italians *far exceeded his own*, suddenly changed his disposition, and reducing the second extended the front of his first line to a just proportion to that of the enemy. Such evolutions, which only veteran troops can execute without confusion in a moment of danger, commonly prove decisive; but as this engagement began towards the close of the day, and was contested with great obstinacy during the whole night, there was less room for the conduct of the general than

\* See Maffei, Verona illustrated, part i. p. 142, 150.

for the courage of the soldiers. The return of light displayed the victory of Constantine, and a field of carnage covered with many thousands of the vanquished. Their general, Pomponianus, was found among the slain.”\*

“Great feats of prowess,” says Muratori, “were displayed by Constantine in this battle—throwing himself, sword in hand, into the thickest *melée* of the fight; so that after the victory his officers conjured him, with tears in their eyes, not to hazard, in this manner, a life of such importance.” It would appear that Verona held out for some time after; and it is uncertain whether it was taken by assault or surrendered at discretion. The lives not only of the inhabitants but of the garrison were spared. But as there was not a sufficiency of bonds to secure the latter, Constantine ordered them to be confined with fetters made out of their own swords. It would appear from a hint in Nazarius, that Aquileia and Modena also made some resistance.

After these successes the Labarum advanced to Rome. But instead of being alarmed, Maxentius was delighted at this. Confident in his best troops, still far outnumbering the advancing army, and in the impregnable strength of the city, crowded with provisions: relying also not a little on those heaps of ill-gotten treasure which had proved so irresistible to the legions of Severus and Maximian; he rejoiced at seeing his rival coming so completely within his grasp. And it seems obvious that he might have not only defied the invader, but ultimately have stripped him of all his laurels and of his life, had he merely stood on the defensive. To have formed the blockade of that boundless city with an army so diminutive would have been impossible; any attempt to carry it by storm, garrisoned as it was and fortified by the enormous walls so recently built by Aurelian, could not be expected to succeed; and for Constantine, retreat,

\* Gibbon, ch. xiv. vol. ii. p. 82, 83.



or even a decisive check, must have proved fatal. But contrary to the warnings of his haruspices and magicians, who plied their infernal arts incessantly, he was, as it were, driven out by the hootings and gibes cast at him by the mobs of the Coliseum and the Circus, and forced to meet his rival in the field.

It would seem from Lactantius, that the army of Constantine had met with opposition and suffered some reverses, on approaching the vicinity of Rome ; and he distinctly states that Constantine, in another revelation made to him the night before the battle, was directed to have the monogram, or sacred symbol, emblazoned upon the bucklers and arms of his legioners. As the first rays of the October\* sun gleamed from this mysterious emblem—already the token to them of so many victories—the soldiers of the Labarum were again fired with an ardour that could not be resisted. The iron front of the Maxentians extended along the plain of “Saxa rubra” almost as far as the eye could reach, and their deep and serried battalions rested upon the right bank of the Tiber, which at once secured their rear, and left even to the cowardly no alternative but to fight desperately. They far exceeded the army of the cross in number, and they fought with such unflinching valour, that, after the battle, the bodies of the prætorians were found upon the same ground on which they met the first charge.

“But wherever the mystical standard appeared, happened a rout of the enemies, and a pursuit was made by those who had gotten the better ; which, when Constantine perceived, in whatever place he saw any party of the army pressed hard upon, thither he ordered the salutary trophy to be carried, as some efficacious talisman to procure a victory. After the doing whereof, a victory followed immediately ; in regard that strength and courage were by a divine act of Providence infused into those who fought.”†

\* Oct. 29, A.D. 312.

† Euseb. Life of Const. book ii. ch. 7. It is not presuming too much to suppose that, the influence of the “salutary trophy” was as

The victory was decisive. Most of those who escaped from the field were overwhelmed in the Tiber, by the sinking or breaking up of a bridge of boats which had been constructed, either at or near the Milvian bridge. The latter had been probably broken down to prevent the approach of Constantine along the Flaminian road. The tyrant persecutor had this bridge of boats so contrived as to go to pieces by machinery, under the management of artizans stationed in the boats for that purpose; and thus, to adopt the idea of Eusebius, who heard the narrative he gives us from Constantine himself, the wretched persecutor of that sacred name, which was to his rival the pledge of victory, was taken in his own snare; for the bridge having been loosened, by mistake or accident, at the very time Maxentius was retreating over it with his guards, he and they were overwhelmed, "and sank like lead into the deep waters."

"So that those who by Divine assistance had been victorious," he continues, "in such sort as did the Israelites of old under Moses, might have taken up the expressions of that canticle which was sung over the destruction of Pharaoh—'We will sing unto the Lord, for he hath been magnificently glorified. The horse and his rider hath he cast into the deep.' And again; 'Who is like to thee, O Lord, among the gods? Thou hast been glorified in the saints, admirable in glories, doing wonders.'"\*

vividly felt and as promptly made use of in the battle of "Saxa Rubra" as in the later wars of Constantine against Licinius.

"Saxa Rubra," or "The Red Rocks," about nine miles up the river, on the Tuscan side, was in the vicinity of the Cremera, a trifling rivulet, illustrated by the valour and total slaughter of the three hundred Fabii.—See Aurelius Victor, and Cellarius, *Geograph.* tom. i. p. 463. Florus and Livy, for the overthrow of the Fabii.

\* Euseb. *Life of Const.* book i. chap. 38. Lebeau, *Hist. de Bas. Emp.* tom. i. l. 2; and Tillemont, *Hist. des Emper.* tom. iv. par. 1. p. 576, following the texts of Eusebius and Zosimus, are of opinion that this bridge of boats was nine miles up the river, and immediately in the rear of the Maxentians as they were drawn up in battle; but Prudentius, a Roman writer, who must be presumed

to have known the topography much better than the Greeks, expressly states that Maxentius was drowned at the Milvian bridge.

“Testis Christicolæ ducis adventantis ad urbem  
*Milvius* exceptum Tiberinâ in stagno tyrannum  
*Præcipitans,*” &c.

*Prud. adv. Symmach. l. i. de Potent. Crucis.*

Gibbon, on this occasion, is amused at Tillemont's simplicity. Aur. Victor. says the battle was fought “*millia ferme novem,*” nearly nine miles above Rome.

Lebeau, l. i. p. 89 to end, narrates and discusses the apparition of the cross with his accustomed candour and erudition. He evidently inclines to believe it as narrated by Eusebius; thinks it appeared on this side the Alps, *i. e.* in Gaul; indeed it is not easy to imagine how any one after reading attentively the account in Eusebius could doubt it. Constantine seems to allude to it as to a notorious fact in his manifesto to the people of the east. In apostrophising the Deity, he says:—“For by thy guidance and assistance, I have *undertaken* and perfected salutary things, (the emancipation of the empire, and especially of the Christians;) everywhere carrying before me thy sign, I have led on my victorious army,” &c.—See Euseb. Life of Const. book ii. chap. 45.



### CHAPTER III.

“Nomen ipsum crucis absit non modo à corpore civium Romanorum, sed etiam à cogitatione, oculis, auribus.”—*M. T. Cicer. pro Rabir. v.*

“I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself.”—*Gospel according to St. John, xii. 32.*

THE triumph, so called from *Θρίαμβος*, the Greek name of Bacchus, who is said to have been the inventor of such processions, was the highest aim of ambition among the heroes of Rome. It outshone in splendour all the other spectacles of a city, so justly renowned for pageantry.

According to legal usage, no general was entitled to this honour who had not slain five thousand enemies of the republic in one battle, and by that victory enlarged its territory. But whoever had the fortune to have it decreed him, advanced with the first dawn from the Vatican fields at the head of his companions in arms to the triumphal gate. Here, after a slight refectation, he was invested with the triumphal robes; the accustomed rites to the deities stationed at the gate were performed; and then the procession moved along the *via triumphalis*, the streets—ranged with altars that smoked with incense—being thickly strewn with flowers.\*

First went musicians of various kinds, singing and playing triumphal songs; next were led the oxen to be sacrificed, having their horns gilt, and their heads adorned with fillets and garlands; then in carriages were brought the spoils taken from the enemy—statues, pictures, plate, armour, gold, and silver, and brass;

\* Josephus de Bell. Jud. l. viii. p. 24. For the authorities on the subject of the processions, see Adams's Roman Antiquities, p. 325.

also golden crowns, and other gifts sent by the allied and tributary states. The titles of the vanquished nations were inscribed on wooden frames, on which were borne the images or representations of the conquered countries and cities. The captive leaders and princes followed in chains, with their children, kindred, and courtiers; after these captives came the lictors, or executioners, (having their hatchets, or fasces, wreathed with laurel,) followed by a great company of musicians and dancers, dressed like satyrs, and wearing crowns of gold. In the midst of them was one Pantomime, clothed in female garb, whose business it was, with his looks and gestures, to insult the vanquished. Next followed a long train of persons carrying perfumes. Then came the conqueror, dressed in purple embroidered with gold, with a crown of laurel on his head, a branch of laurel in his right hand, and in his left an ivory sceptre with an eagle on the top. His face was painted with vermillion, in like manner as the statue of Jupiter on festival days, and a golden ball was suspended from his neck on his breast, with some amulet in it, or magical preservative against envy. His chariot, in which he stood erect, glittered with gold, and was adorned with ivory, and from the time, probably, of the Tarquins, certainly, of Camillus, was usually drawn by four white horses, and sometimes by elephants, or other singular wild animals. He was attended by his relations, clientage, and a vast concourse of citizens, all in white togas. His children used to ride in the chariot along with him, and that he might not be too much elated, a slave, carrying a golden crown sparkling with gems, crouched behind him, frequently whispering in his ear, "REMEMBER THAT THOU ART A MAN!"

His chariot was followed by the consuls and senators on foot; his legati, and military tribunes, or staff officers, commonly rode by his side. The victorious army, horse and foot, came last, in martial array, crowned with laurel, and decorated with the gifts they had received for their valour, and chanting their own

praises and those of the general, whom they sometimes assailed with railleries. Shouts of "IO TRIUM-PHE!" frequently bursting from the warrior-ranks and chorused by myriads of the Roman people, re-echoed along the Tiber's banks, among the valleys of the seven hills, and seemed to shake the rock-built Capitol itself.

Arrived at the forum, and before his chariot began to climb the hill of triumphs, through the crowded temples that rose along its acclivities, the conqueror ordered the captive kings and chieftains of the vanquished nations, to be led away by the executioners, and put to death in the "Gemonium;" this was a horrid dungeon of the Mamertine prison, at the foot of the Capitol to the right.

On reaching the temple of Jupiter, it was the usage for him to wait till informed by the appointed officers, that his sanguinary orders had been complied with; and then, after having offered up a prayer of thanksgiving to Jupiter and the other gods for his successes, he commanded the victims, which were always white, from the pastures of the Clitumnus, to be sacrificed, and deposited his golden diadem in the lap of Jove, to whom he also dedicated a great portion of the spoils.

Unnumbered were the pomps of this description which had inflated the haughty bosom of Rome with arrogance, from the day, its founder, Romulus, had entered it with captured flocks and cattle—the booty and wailing matrons and orphanage of Alba—until Diocletian and Maximian had triumphed a few years previously, amidst blasphemies against the Crucified, and shouts for the blood of the Christians, in which even the "Io triumphes" were drowned.\* But of all the triumphs of a thousand years, none could be compared to that which stood prepared to cross the Tiber and the Campus Martius, in the year of redemption 312, just as the first dawn after the battle of the Labarum, at Saxa Rubra, was lighting up the ridges of the Sabine and Alban mountains.

\* Nov. 20, A.D. 303.



“No day, since its foundation,” says an eye-witness of the scene, “had ever diffused through Rome a joy so well founded and overflowing; nothing in the immense series of our annals to be compared to the exultation of that triumph. True, no captive princes and generals were driven with mockeries, and in fetters, before the conqueror’s car; but instead of these, there went the Roman senators who had been liberated from prison. No prisoners of war were ordered to the Mamertine for execution, but men who had filled the consulship were drawn forth to the enjoyment of liberty from where they lay in its dungeons condemned to death. Instead of foreign captives, the senate and the Roman people restored to liberty adorned the procession; and instead of being enriched with spoils, the city itself gained deliverance from spoliation. The atrocious crimes that had so long trampled on the honour, and rioted in every excess at the expense of the citizens, were as if dragged like captives at the chariot wheels of him who triumphed.”\*

The destruction of the Milvian bridge had obliged Constantine to encamp on the Vatican fields beyond the Tiber, instead of entering Rome by the Flaminian way the night of the battle; and thus the Roman emperor and his legions were compelled, as if by some invisible, all-ruling power, to carry the standard of the cross into the metropolis of paganism by that track, and no other, which had been marked out, from time immemorial, by the senate and the people, as the only legitimate way of triumphs. Having offered up vows at the tomb of St. Peter,† instead of sacrificing to the idols according to custom, the martial procession began to move across the Tiber into the plain of the Campus Martius.

This tract of level ground, expanding like an arena from the Capitoline, the Quirinal and Pincian hills, to the Tiber, was adorned in its entire extent with

\* Nazarnus in Paneg. apud Baron. ann. 312, No. 54.

† Euseb. Life of Const. book i. ch. 39.

theatres, hippodromes, places for various warlike spectacles and games, with temples surrounded with groves of evergreens, and interwoven one with the other, by shady walks, and velvet lawns; while monuments and trophies of snowy whiteness, and of every order, lined the river-side to the water's edge. The whole was populous with statues, inscribed to the most renowned characters in the Roman annals, and presented a scene so fascinating, "that it was almost impossible to tear one's eyes from beholding it."\* But, towering above all, like an Alp of marble, rose the mausoleum or tomb of Augustus Cæsar, where the urns of the Julian family and of many emperors were placed. When any of them was to be deified, or added to the number of the gods, his body was carried with great pomp and ceremony upon a couch of gold, and placed on a pile of odoriferous wood upon its summit; and, as the flame began to ascend toward the corse, an eagle, fastened there for the purpose, was permitted to take wing, that it might be regarded by the applauding millions as the genius, or "mens divinior," of the emperor soaring aloft to the skies.†

Each terrace, and balcony, and rich veranda of this mighty pile, and of every other tomb, colonnade, and monument, along the line of procession, or within view of it, seemed to swarm with human beings, as the glorious sun poured his orient splendours over the temples and towers of the Capitol, across the adjacent plain. All Rome, from the plebeian to the consular patrician, and of every age and sex, went forth in gala costume, and with hilarity of look, and voice, and feature, that radiated from the heart. Every eye had now been turned for some minutes to the gate of triumph, and every voice was hushed; but when the bronze portals flew open with a sound the instant they were struck by the first beams of morning, and gave ingress to the legions

\* Strabo, *Geog.* l. v. p. 337.

† Herodian, iv. 3.

bearing that sign of conquest that Rome had never beheld till now, the plaudits and acclamations that shook the Campus Martius, and reverberated, from the hills beyond the Tiber, back again, were taken up and prolonged, "like the sound of many waters," by the millions crowded on every vantage ground, and roof, and along the entire extent of the triumphal way itself.

"After Constantine, who, in that juncture," says Eusebius, "acted like Moses, that great servant of God, had offered up his vows and hymns of praise to the Author of victory, he made his entry in triumph into the imperial city. Whereupon all persons, as well those of the senatorial as of the equestrian order, feeling as 't were suddenly liberated from a prison,—they, together with the entire population of Rome, received him with a joy in their countenances that proceeded from their very souls, with acclamations, and a gladness insatiable; and the men, together with the women, the children, and infinite numbers of slaves, hailed him as a redeemer, a benefactor, and a deliverer, with voices that could not be silenced. But both by proclamations and by signs, he intimated that these outpourings were due, not to him, but to that standard of salvation by which he had conquered."\* "The same symbol," says Gibbon, † "sanctified the arms of his soldiers; the cross glittered on their helmets, was engraved on their shields, and interwoven into their banners; and on the helmet and armour of the emperor they were composed of diamonds and precious stones, so that they sparkled and shone in the sun's rays with an enchanting brilliancy." ‡

Passing the field of Mars, where the temples were thickest, the procession of the Labarum moved along through the portico of Octavia, built by Pompey, into the Campus Flaminius; and on by where the

\* Life of Const. book i. ch. 39.

† Ch. xx. vol. ii. p. 445.

‡ "Agnoscas regina, libens mea signa necesse est;

In quibus effigies crucis aut gemmata refulget."—*Prudentius*.



triumphal gate stood in ancient times, between the Tarpeian cliff and the Tiber; thence by the theatre of Marcellus; through the portico of Octavia, sister of Augustus, the Velabrum, and the Forum boarium, into the Circus Maximus. There the spectators, to the number of several hundreds of thousands, were ranged on the couches and marble benches of this Elysium of the Romans, occupying, as it did, the entire valley, from one end to the other, between the Palatine hill and the Aventine; then wheeling to the left, the procession moved along between the Palatine and the Cœlian, towards the Coliseum, in the vicinity of which, at a place called the "Veteres Curiaë," it passed under a temporary arch of triumph, built afterwards of marble. It was inscribed to the Liberator of the City, to the founder of tranquillity, and stated that all this he had effected, "through the inspiration of the Divinity."\* Wheeling again to the left, along the "sacred way," before descending between the palace and the temple of Peace to the Roman forum, the triumph, midst ever-increasing throngs and acclamations, passed under the arch of Titus, of which the relievi representing the sacred emblems and furniture of the Jewish temple, among the other spoils of conquest, bore perpetual testimony to the accomplishment of our Lord's denunciation against Jerusalem.

But that which above all distinguished this triumph was its termination; for it ended not, as heretofore, in the murder of noble captives, and idolatrous sacrifices to Jupiter, but in the planting upon the Capitol of that cross hitherto regarded with such bitter execration, and so long and cruelly persecuted

\* The inscription on the arch of triumph, still existing uninjured, runs:—"IMP. CÆS. FL. CONSTANTINO . MAXIMO . P. F. AUGUSTO . S. P. Q. R. QUOD . INSTINCTU . DIVINITATIS . MENTIS . MAGNITUDE . CUM . EXERCITU . SUO . TAM . DE . TYRANNO , QUAM . DE . OMNI . EJUS . FACTIONE . UNO . TEMPORE . JUSTIS . REMPUBLICAM . ULTUS . EST . ARMIS , ARCUM . TRIUMPHALIS . INSIGNEM . DICAVIT . LIBERATORI . URBIS , FUNDATORI . QUIETIS."

by Rome. "And with a loud voice, and by inscriptions," says Eusebius, "Constantine made known to all men the standard of salvation by erecting this great trophy in the midst of the imperial city, with a Latin inscription to the following effect :—

"BY THIS SALUTARY SIGN, THE GENUINE TYPE OF FORTITUDE, I HAVE LIBERATED AND FREED YOUR CITY FROM THE SLAVISH YOKE OF THE TYRANT ; AND HAVE SET AT LIBERTY THE SENATE AND PEOPLE OF ROME, RESTORING THEM TO THEIR PRISTINE SPLENDOUR AND DIGNITY."\*

\* Euseb. Life of Const. book i. ch. 40.

## CHAPTER IV.

“The struggle between the fury of despotism and the heroism of conviction, between executioners and martyrs, is worthy of eternal remembrance.”—*Sismondi, Fall of the Rom. Emp.*, vol. i. p. 43.

PRUDENTIUS represents the Romans as filled with astonishment and admiration at this occurrence. And how could it be otherwise? It was a miracle incomparably greater, more difficult to conceive, and more admirably calculated to convince their minds of the Divinity of the Crucified, than if his sign had appeared to them in the heavens, as it had appeared to Constantine.

From the present spectacle of triumph upon the Capitol, their memories reverted to the catacombs, to the scenes of massacre, and torment, and infamy, associated with the Christian name for so many centuries; and when they reflected upon the despicable agency by which that symbol, to Romans of all others the most execrable, had been first introduced into their city; when they reflected that its abettors had never been tolerated, never suffered to enjoy a moment's respite from the pursuit of the laws, and from popular outrage and execration; above all, when they reflected, how again and again, and reign after reign, the Christians had been singled out, and doomed to destruction, by the most mighty and ruthless of the emperors; though the cross was there before them, the cynosure of every eye amidst the triumph—though the “Salves” and “Io triumphes” that hailed it were pealing like thunder among the seven hills—though it glittered on the helmets and armour of the legions, and was displayed in the hand of their emperor, as the standard to which *he* was indebted for his victories, *they* for their emancipation—still their intellects



became bewildered, and they preferred rather to distrust their own senses than to acquiesce in the reality of what they witnessed. When Cicero, in defending Rabirius, in the forum just beneath them, had said, that "the bare mention of the cross was intolerable to the Roman ear, and that it never failed to excite in the Roman mind the most vehement feelings of aversion and hostility," he merely echoed what he knew to be a cherished sentiment of every order and individual of the commonwealth; but as if to render this badge of infamous and servile torture still more hateful in their eyes, it is introduced to their city under the auspices of a Jew!—of a Jew, ignorant of letters, of mean extraction, that is, by one whose lineage and whose presence would seem to have been chosen, not with any view to conciliate favour, but, on the contrary, to inflame resentment, and give the finishing stroke to this audacious affront to Roman pride, of which he had been made the bearer. And how did Rome receive this messenger? Just as might have been anticipated. He was crucified—nailed hand and foot, after having been scourged, like a caitiff Israelite, to the gibbet, which he had the insane folly to propose, as the symbol of salvation and of hope, to the homage of the Roman people. The dupes of his preaching met with no better treatment; without distinction of rank, sex, or age, they were seized, and submitted to tortures the most exquisite. Devoted to destruction, and hunted from the face of the earth as a race of miscreants, the enemies of gods and men, no place of refuge was left for them, but the dark caverns of the earth; and even in these labyrinths of everlasting gloom, and sepulchral silence, they were not secure against the inroads of persecution. The whole weight of the Roman world had been accumulated, as if to crush, and extinguish this execrated monster, in the caverns of congenial darkness, where it sought to shelter itself from the indignation of the human race. Stroke after stroke had fallen upon its head, and upon its members. Its limbs had been hacked, and torn, and cut

to pieces, and strewed as a feast for dogs, and ravens ; the bones, which they did not devour, were consumed with fire, and the ashes given to the winds.

And is it now triumphant on the Capitol?—In despite of the million voices that proclaim it ; though the fact's certainty is thundering in the ear ; though the eye is dazzled with its truth, flashing on it from sword and shield ; though it is beheld emblazoned on the imperial banner, and perused, and conned over, and re-read, in the bronze letters of the inscription—nevertheless, and in despite of all this, the fact appears incredible. There must have been that day, upon the Capitol, many thousands who had a vivid recollection of what Christianity had suffered in Rome during the last half century. In order to realize in some feeble degree what their emotions must have been, let us but just glance back at the series of events,—suppose from the edict of Decius, and the martyrdom of Pope Fabian, in the year 253, or about fifty-nine years before the triumph.

“No sooner,” says Orosius, “had Decius made himself master of the empire, by the defeat and death of the Emperor Philip and his brother, than he, as it were, girded himself up for the slaughter and persecution of the Christians. His general edict, the seventh fulminated against them since that of Nero, was proclaimed, and put in force, all over the Roman world ; and forthwith, the gates of heaven began to be thronged with the multitudes who came up thither from the midst of the most hideous torments.”\*—It would seem as if all the furious and revengeful passions were determined to have ample compensation for the temporary check they had experienced during the brief reign of Philip, more disposed, apparently, to prevent than promote the legalized and prescriptive cruelties against the Christians ; for we are informed by St. Gregory of Nyssa, that all public and private business was suspended, and that nothing else

\* L. vi. p. 21.—See also Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. b. vi. p. 39.

but the great work of persecution was thought of, either by the magistrates or the citizens—in their furious determination to drag to torture and exterminate whosoever professed the faith.

The Christians had long become so numerous, that, to exterminate them would have been in a great measure to depopulate the empire ; and on this account, the fury of Maximin had been levelled almost exclusively against the hierarchy, in the hope that Christianity would expire with those whose office it was to preserve and propagate it. But this attempt having miscarried, it was resolved by Decius to destroy the faith, without taking away the lives of his Christian subjects. With this design, naked swords, crosses, pincers, and hooks of iron for lacerating the flesh, gridirons made redhot, raging wild beasts, gibbets, and racks, with all the most horrid engines of torture, were arrayed, by order of the pro-consuls and governors of districts, around their tribunals, in order to terrify those who were led before them to abjure the faith. In submitting the confessors to the racks, and to the most diversified and excruciating tortures, they were ever cautious not to endanger life. Nay, after having dislocated and broken the limbs of some, cut and hacked away the flesh of others, bit by bit, and inflicted the most cruel wounds in every shape upon them, they caused their bodies to be skilfully medicated and cured, in order to render them obnoxious to new torments. In like manner, when those who were confined in dungeons had been reduced to death's door by cruel stripes, by the weight of the fetters, and by starvation, they were tended and cherished with cruel solicitude, in order that they might not escape from their tormentors.\*

Every city and village was traversed by frantic mobs, vociferating, "To the lions with the Christians !

\* "Cupientibus mori," says St. Cyprian, "non permittebatur occidi sed tamdiu tormenta laniarent, quamdiu non fidem, quæ invicta est, vincerent, sed carnem quæ infirma est fatigarent."—*Ep.* 53, *ed. Baluz.*



The Christians to the flames ! Away with them to the cross !” Nothing was to be heard but the clanking of chains, the mournful and piteous wailings of young boys, aged men, and tender virgins, as they were inhumanly dragged, with blows, and every insulting outrage, before the judges ; for these, and their ferocious satellites were insensible to every sentiment of respect for either the infirmities of age, or for virgin modesty. The prisons were crowded with holy confessors, so that other public buildings were employed to receive them.

How wanton was the cruelty of the heathens towards the martyrs, we learn from one species of torture mentioned by St. Jerome :—“ The Christian,” says this father, “ was first stretched upon the rack, and burned with heated hoops or plates of iron ; he was then smeared all over with honey, placed with his hands bound behind him in the burning sun ; and thus left to putrify and expire, exposed to the annoyances and stings of insects.”

The venerable pontiff, St. Fabian, was one of the first victims of this persecution, as the city of Rome was the chief focus of its violence ; for the emperor, bent on the extirpation of the Christian hierarchy in general, had proclaimed, with direful imprecations and blasphemies, that he had rather tolerate a rival in the empire, than suffer a pope to reign or be constituted in Rome.\* Hence such was the intense vigilance of the tyrant, that the holy see remained vacant for more than a year, until pope Cornelius was elected in the place of Fabian, that is, pursues St. Cyprian, in the place of Peter.† We may form some conjecture of the apostolic spirit of the new pontiff,

\* “ Cum tyrannus, infestus sacerdotibus Dei, fanda atque infanda comminaretur, cum multo patientius et tolerabilius audiret levare adversus se æmulum principem, quam constitui Romæ Dei sacerdotem,” &c.—*S. Cypr. Ep. ad Antonianum*.

† “ Cum Fabiani locus, id est, locus Petri, vacaret,” &c.—*S. Cypr. Ep. 52*. See also the circular letter of the Roman clergy, ‘sede vacante,’ given by Cardinal Baron. ad ann. 253, No. 57.

and of the general aspect of the church, from the tenor of a letter or rescript, written by St. Cornelius to his legate in Gaul, St. Lupicinus of Vienne—"Know, dearest brother," says the pope, "that the ark of God is most fiercely assailed by the tempest of persecution, and that in pursuance of the edicts, the Christians are everywhere subjected to various torments; for, it would seem that an emperor has been appointed to succeed Decius, (slain by the Goths,) and reigns in the Roman city for this object alone; so that there is no possibility of celebrating mass publicly, or even in the more noted crypts. Wherefore let all the faithful of Christ (of the Gallic province) be exhorted by your charity, not to dread those who have power to slay the body, but rather to fear Him who hath power to destroy both body and soul. Already many have been crowned with martyrdom. Pray that we also may run the course which we know by revelation from our Lord to be in store for us. Brother in the Lord, farewell; salute all who love us in Christ."\*

He was soon after banished to Centum Cellæ, (now Civita Vecchia,) from whence he still continued to govern the church; until a letter sent him by St. Cyprian having been intercepted or seized by the government, he was ordered up to Rome. Though it was night when he arrived, he was immediately brought into the presence of the emperor, Volusianus, who was attended by the prefect of the city, and interrogated thus:—

"Has thy perversity arisen to that pitch, that not content with making light of the gods, thou hast even presumed to carry on correspondence against the republic, in defiance of the laws and of our menaces?" Cornelius answered—

"The letters which I received were not against the republic; they regarded the crown of the Lord."†

\* Apud Baron. ad ann. 255, No. 47.

† "Ego de coronâ Domini litteras accepi," &c. Cardinal Baronius says, "Corona Domini," the crown of the Lord, may mean

The emperor in anger ordered him to be taken from his presence, to have his mouth beaten with sticks made heavy with lead, and to be beheaded if he still refused to sacrifice. This sentence was made absolute on the pontiff's steady refusal to do so ; and he was accordingly handed over for execution to an officer named Cerealis.

It happened that Sallustia, the wife of Cerealis, had been bedridden from paralysis for fifteen years ; whereupon, the pontiff was no sooner placed in his hands, than this officer entreated him to come and cure his wife. Cornelius went with him, accompanied by two priests and one cleric, a reader ; and when he had come to where the infirm woman lay, the most holy pope gave forth this prayer :—“ Lord God, Creator of all things visible and invisible, who hast vouchsafed to come to us sinners in order to redeem us ; do thou raise up this thy disabled handmaid, and extend to her that mercy by which thou didst give sight to him who was born blind, that she also may recognise thy glory ;” and holding the hand of Sallustia, he raised her up, saying, “ In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and stand upon thy feet !” Presently, she rose up, exclaiming, and crying out, “ Truly, Christ is God, and the Son of God !” and then she said to Cornelius, “ I conjure you, in the name of Christ, to baptize me ;” and with that, she ran and filled a vase with water, and brought it to him. At the sight of so great a miracle, the soldiers also who were with Cerealis, all prostrated themselves at the feet of Pope Cornelius, trembling, and imploring to be baptized ; and, seeing the hand of God in all this, he baptized them, and offered for them the eucharistic sacrifice ; and thus all were

either the church, or the crown of martyrdom. The latter is obviously that in which the holy pontiff uses it ; because the intercepted letter (the 57th of St. Cyprian) regarded the severity of the persecution, the glory of the martyrs, and the magnanimous constancy of St. Cornelius himself.—*Vid. Bar. ad ann. 255, No. 50 et seq.*



made partakers of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The emperor being informed of all these things, sent and had all apprehended, both those of the household of Cerealis, and the soldiers who embraced the faith, and led out with the blessed Cornelius, that they might be constrained to offer sacrifice. They were brought outside the walls by the Appian gate to the temple of Mars; but instead of sacrificing, they spat in derision at the temple, and were all beheaded with the most blessed pope, to the number of one and twenty, and with them, Cerealis also, with his wife Sallustia, on the 18th of the kalends of October. But that same night, the blessed Lucina, with some clerics and her own domestics, came and stole away the bodies of the martyrs, and buried them in her own grounds, in a crypt near the cemetery of Calistus.\*

Pope Cornelius was immediately succeeded by Lucius, one of the priests who had accompanied him in his exile. He also was beheaded, in less than two years, on the 4th of the nones of March; and when hastening to his martyrdom, says the Liber Pontificalis, "he confided the administration of the church to his archdeacon Stephen," by whom he was succeeded in the pontificate, after an interval of thirty-four days.†

It was in the second year of his reign that edicts were issued by the emperors Valerian and Gallienus; and among the victims of this persecution, the most cruel that had as yet assailed the church, was this great pontiff and guardian of the faith. The acts of his martyrdom are very singular.‡

\* These acts of St. Cornelius are given by Card. Baron. ad ann. 258, No. 59, from the martyrology of Ado, Sept. 24—"atque ex antiquis Scriptis libris à nobis (Car. Bar.) diligenter recognitis et emendatis."

† April 9, A.D. 257.

‡ Vid. Baron. ann. 259, No. 8, to No. 4, ann. 260.

## CHAPTER V.

“We observe that already, in early times, there were traces in the Romish bishops of an assumption, that a peculiar decisive authority was due to them, as the successors of St. Peter, in church controversies; and that the ‘Cathedra Petri’ was to have a prevailing sway. The Romish bishop Victor gave a specimen of this assumption, when he excommunicated the churches of Asia Minor, A.D. 190. The Romish bishop, Stephanus, allowed himself to be carried away by the same spirit of hierarchical encroachment.”—*Neander, Hist. of the Ch. Rel. and Ch. Rose’s Trans.* vol. i. p. 225.

VALERIUS and Acilius being consuls, Hippolytus, a citizen of Rome, and a Christian, passed a solitary life in the crypts; to whom many Gentiles resorting for apostolic instruction, were converted to Christ and baptized. This same Hippolytus came frequently to the feet of Bishop Stephen, to entreat baptism for his catechumens, whom he brought with him; and so great was the number thus brought over to Christianity, that the proceedings of Hippolytus were made known by the informers (delatores) to Maximus, the city prefect, and by him reported to the emperors. On hearing this, Hippolytus went immediately to tell St. Stephen the bishop. Whereupon the blessed Stephen called around him the Christian multitude, and began, by holy exhortations and by lore of holy writ, to imbue their minds with sentiments of pious confidence; amongst other things he spoke the following:—

“My beloved little children, listen to me a sinner. While there is yet time, let us be instant in good works, and that not only to our neighbours, but to ourselves; and in the first place, let me admonish each one, to take up his cross, and follow our Lord

Jesus Christ, who has vouchsafed to say to us, 'Who loves his life shall lose it; but who loses his life, for my sake, shall find it in eternity.' Wherefore, I beseech you all to be most solicitous, not only for your own, but for your neighbours' salvation; so that if any among you have friends or relations still in heathenism, let him hasten to conduct them hither, to receive baptism at our hands."

Then Hippolytus cast himself at the feet of the blessed pontiff Stephen, saying, "Good father, may it please you, there are my nephew and his sister, both Gentiles, whom I have reared myself; a little boy about ten years of age, more or less, and a girl of thirteen: their mother, a Gentile, is called Paulina; their father, who sends them both to me from time to time, is named Adrias." Then the blessed Stephen exhorted him to detain the children when next sent, that thereby the parents also might be brought to visit him.

After two days, the above-mentioned children came to Hippolytus, bringing certain cakes of bread; who detaining them, sent word to the blessed Stephen, who coming embraced the little ones, and cherished them. Full of solicitude about their children, the parents came in haste to seek them. Then Stephen addressed them on the terrors of the future and tremendous judgment, earnestly exhorting them to abandon the idols, as did Hippolytus also. To whom Adrias, the father of the children, said, that he dreaded being despoiled of his property, and put to death—the lot prepared for all who professed themselves Christians. Paulina, sister of Hippolytus, said the same, inveighing against him for urging such a course; for she detested the religion of the Christians; and so they departed, leaving those in the crypts who had exhorted them without success, but not without hope.

Then the blessed Stephen, calling the learned priest Eusebius, and Marcellus, a deacon, sent them to Adrias and Paulina, to invite them again to the catacomb, where Hippolytus abode; and when they were come, Eusebius said to them, "Christ expects you, that



he may introduce you into the kingdom of heaven." And when Paulina began to insist on the glory of this world, and the miserable lot of the Christians, he portrayed to them the ineffable glories of heaven, which they could not attain, except through the faith, and being baptized. Paulina declined to decide till the next day.—The same night, there came a Christian father and mother, with their son, who was a paralytic, to Eusebius in the catacomb, to have him baptized; who, praying over him, baptized him; whereupon he was cured, and his tongue having been loosed, he gave praise to God. Then Eusebius offered sacrifice, and all participated in the body and blood of Christ; which when Stephen the bishop heard, he came, and they rejoiced together.

But when it was morning Adrias and Paulina returned, and on hearing of the cure of the boy, being filled with admiration, they prostrated themselves with great contrition, praying of the pontiff to be baptized. Seeing this, Hippolytus, giving thanks to God, said to the blessed Stephen, "Holy lord, do not defer their baptism." The blessed Stephen said, "Let the solemnities be completed, and put to them the prescribed questions, that it may be seen if they truly believe, and have no longer any trepidation of heart." After the interrogation, he enjoined them a fast, and having instructed all the catechumens, he baptized them in the name of the Trinity; and placing the sign of the cross, he called the boy Neone, the girl Mary; and he offered sacrifice for them. And when all had communicated, the blessed Stephen departed thence. Then the newly baptized began to dwell with Hippolytus, Eusebius, and Marcellus, in the catacombs; but their property which they had in the city they distributed among the poor.

Soon as this transaction came to the ears of the emperors, orders were issued to seek out the converts, and a reward of half their property was offered to whoever should detect them. It was then that one Maximus, a writer in one of the government offices, had

recourse to this device to find them out. He feigned himself a Christian who begged alms, and coming to a place called Area Carbonaria, on the Cœlian mount, remained there begging till he saw Adrias passing by ; to whom he thus addressed himself, in order to get proof of his being a Christian : "Through Christ, whom I believe, I beseech you to take pity on my distress." Then Adrias, taking pity on him, bid him follow. But when they were entering the house, Maximus was seized by a demon, and cried out : "Men of God ! I am an informer. I see above me a dense fire ; pray for me, for I am tortured by the flames." Afterwards, when they had supplicated for him with tears, and falling prostrate on the ground, he was cured ; and when they lifted him up he began to exclaim : "Perish the worshippers of idols ; I petition to be baptized." They led him to the blessed Stephen, who having instructed, at length baptized him ; and he prayed to remain some days with Stephen, the bishop, after he was made a Christian.

Search was made for Maximus, on his nonappearance, and the rumour of what he had done, and his house having been visited by some of his fellow clerks sent from the same department, they found him prostrate in prayer ; and, laying hold of him, they brought him before Valerian, who said, "Hast thou been so blinded by bribes as to deceive me by false promises ?" "True," replied Maximus, "hitherto I have been blind, but now, being illuminated, I see." "In what light ?" said the emperor. "In the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ," replied Maximus. Then Valerian, in a rage, ordered him to be precipitated from one of the bridges of the Tiber. His body was afterwards interred by Eusebius, in the cemetery of Callistus, on the Appian-way, 13th of the kalends of February.\*

After this, Valerian sent a body of seventy soldiers, with orders to use every diligence till they had found Eusebius and the others ; and when the holy priest,

\* "His tomb," says Cardinal Baronius, "remains to this day, marked with this inscription, LOCUS MAXIMI."—A. D. 259. No. 13.

with Adrias, Hippolytus, Paulina, and the children, having been discovered, was led to the forum of Trajan, in bonds, the deacon, Marcellus, gave vent to complaints against the emperor for his cruelties against the friends of truth, and, being denounced for this by Secundinus Togatus, he also was seized.

Eusebius, the priest, was the first interrogated by the judge. "Are you the disturber of the city?—But first, what is your name?" "I am called Eusebius, and a priest." Then the judge ordered him to be set aside, and Adrias to be brought in; who, being first interrogated as to his name, and then as to how he came by the abundance of wealth and affluence with which he seduced the people, replied: "In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, I inherit it from the industry of my parents." "Therefore make use of your inheritance, and waste it not in subverting others." "I do expend it, truly, and without deception, for the advantage of myself and my children." The judge said, "Hast thou children and a wife?" He replied, "They are here with me in chains." "Let them be brought in," said the judge.

Then Paulina, with her children, Neone and Mary, was brought within the veil, followed by Marcellus, the deacon, and Hippolytus, when the judge said, "Is this your wife? and are those your children?" "They are," said Adrias. "And who are those other two?" "That is the blessed Marcellus, the deacon; this is my brother Hippolytus, a singular servant of Christ." Turning to them, the judge said, "Declare with your own mouths by what names you are called." Marcellus said, "I am called Marcellus, the deacon." "You," said he to Hippolytus; "what is your name?" "Hippolytus, servant of the servants of Christ."

The judge then ordered Paulina and her children to be taken aside, and said to Adrias, "Tell where your treasures are, and you, and those who have been led in with you, offer sacrifice to the gods, and save your lives, which otherwise you shall speedily relinquish." "We," replied Hippolytus, "have already



cast away vain idols, and have found the Lord of heaven and earth, Christ the Son of God, whom we believe." Then the judge ordered all to be committed to the public prison, and not to be separated. And they were led to the Mamertine keep.

After three days, the prefect, assisted by Probus, held his court in the Tellude, where he had ordered instruments of torture of all descriptions to be kept in readiness. Adrias was brought in first, and interrogated about his property. When nothing satisfactory was elicited, the altar was ordered to be lighted up before the goddess Minerva, and they were ordered to offer incense. But all rejecting the proposal with horror, laughed at the judge for asking them. They were then ordered to be stripped, and, being extended naked on the rack, were beaten with sticks. Then the blessed Paulina, being very severely beaten, resigned her soul to God. Seeing this, the judge ordered Eusebius and Marcellus to be beheaded. The sentence was executed at the Petra Scelerata, near the amphitheatre, on the 13th of the kalends of November. Their bodies were left for the dogs; that of St. Paulina was cast out of the court on the pavement; and all three were collected by another Hippolytus, a deacon, and buried near the Via Appia, in the crypt where they had so often met.

Secundinus, after this, brought Adrias and his children, with Hippolytus, home to his own house, leaving nothing untried to discover the money; but their answer was, "What we had we expended on the poor; our treasures are our souls, which we can on no account afford to lose; obey your commission." Then Secundinus had the children tortured; to whom their father said: "Be constant, my children;" who, while they were under the strokes, said nothing but "Christ assist us!"

After this, he commanded Adrias and Hippolytus to be submitted to torments, directing their sides to be burned with torches; and when they had been tortured in various ways, and could in nowise be induced to

sacrifice, or even to say that they consented to it, Secundinus said, "Quickly lift the children, Neone and Mary, from the ground, and, carrying them to the Petra Scelerata, slay them before their father's eyes." When this had been done, their bodies were flung on the public place, where they were collected by the faithful, and interred in the same catacomb, near the Via Appia, with their mother, on the 6th of the kalends of November.

When Secundinus had reported all to Valerian, after eight days he directed his tribunal to be prepared in the Circus Flaminius; and Hippolytus and Adrias, bound in chains, to be brought with a herald, crying out before them, "These are the nefarious wretches—the nefarious wretches who overthrow the city;" and when placed, the judge began again about the money, saying, "Give up the money by which you used to lead the people into error." "We preach Christ," replied Adrias, "who deigned to liberate us from error, not for the destruction of men, but that they may have life." When Secundinus Togatus saw his words availed nothing, he directed their jaws to be beaten for a very long time with leaded sticks, while the crier made proclamation to them: "Sacrifice to the gods by burning incense!" for he had ordered a lighted tripod to be placed there for the purpose. Hippolytus, streaming with blood, cried out: "Execute your office, unhappy man, and cease not." Then Secundinus ordered the executioners to cease beating them, and said, "Now, at length, consult for yourselves: see how I have compassion on your infatuation." They answered: "We are ready to sustain all torments, but not to do what you or the emperor want of us." Secundinus reported to Valerian, who ordered them to be forthwith destroyed in the presence of the people.

Then Secundinus commanded them to be brought to the bridge of Antonine, and to be beaten to death; where, after suffering for a long time, they gave up the ghost; and their bodies were left in the same place,

near the island Lycaonia.\* Hippolytus, a deacon of the Roman church, came by night, and removed them to the same crypt, near the Appian way, where the bodies of the other saints had been placed, on the 5th of the ides of December.

Nine months after, a Grecian matron named Marta, and her daughter, came to Rome to visit Adrias and Paulina, who were their kinsfolk; and when they had sought them and could not find them, hearing that they had been crowned with martyrdom, they rejoiced exceedingly. And inquiring where their bodies were, when they had found them they took up their abode in that crypt; passing their nights and days in holy vigils and prayers; until after thirteen years, they yielded up their souls in peace, and were there interred.

But these were only the preludes to persecution. When the edict was published, the blessed Stephen, having assembled all the clergy, thus addressed them:

“Brethren and fellow soldiers, you have heard of the cruel and diabolical mandates that have been issued; that if any Gentile deliver up a Christian, he shall receive his entire property. Do you, therefore, brethren, reject the goods of this world with contempt, that you may receive a celestial kingdom; fear not the princes of this world, but pray to the Lord God of heaven and to Jesus Christ his Son, who can rescue us from the hands of our enemies, and from the malice of Satan, to associate us to his grace.”

Then the presbyter, Bonus, answering said, “Not only are we prepared to relinquish earthly possessions, but even to pour out our blood for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we merit to obtain his grace.” And having spoken thus, all the clergy prostrated themselves at the feet of blessed Stephen, and told him that there were some Gentile children and others of their neighbours not yet baptized,

\* The island of the Tiber, thus called from a temple of the Lycæonian Jove that was there.



whom they prayed permission to bring, wherefore, he directed that all should assemble the day after, in the crypt of Nepotiana.

When the next day came, there were found assembled catechumens of both sexes, to the number of one hundred and eight, all of whom the same Stephen baptized, and offered for them sacrifice, of which all partook. While the pontiff held his station in this catacomb, arranging the affairs of the church, teaching, exhorting, holding councils, and celebrating mass through the crypts of the martyrs, multitudes of the Gentiles resorted to him to be instructed and baptized.

The servant of one of these, Sempronius, had been seized and tried in every way to wring from him where he had disposed of his master's riches; and, amongst other things, when the idol of Mars with a tripod was placed before him that he might sacrifice, he said, "May the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, destroy thee!" and forthwith the idol melted. Amazed at this, Olympius, the officer charged with his execution, ordered him to be brought to his own dwelling, threatening to exhaust all species of torments on him that very night.

On coming home, he told his wife, Exuperia, how the idol had melted at the name of Christ. "If, then," said she, "so great be the virtue of that name as thou narratest, it is better for us to abandon gods who cannot defend either us or themselves, and seek him who gave sight to the daughter of Nemesius." Olympius then told his domestic, Tertullian, to treat Sempronius with honour, and try to discover where were the treasures of Nemesius, his master. But that same night, he, with his wife Exuperia, along with their son, came to Sempronius, and falling at his feet, said, "We recognise the power of Christ: we seek to be baptized by thee." Sempronius said to Olympius, "If you do penance, with your wife and son, all shall be administered to you in due season." "Thou shalt have proof even now," said

Olympius, "that, from my whole heart, I believe in the Lord whom thou preachest;" and so saying, he opened his chamber, where he had a lararium, and in it idols of gold, and of silver, and of marble, and told Sempronius that he was ready to do with them whatsoever he should direct. "Then," said Sempronius, "destroy them, every one, with your own hands. The gold and silver ones melt down with fire, and distribute among the poor; and, then, I shall know that thou believest in thy whole heart." When Olympius had done so, a voice was heard saying, Let my Spirit rest in thee. On hearing this Olympius and his wife began to be strengthened, more and more, and to glow with fervent longing to be baptized.

Sempronius communicated these things to Nemesius, now at liberty, who went in haste to inform blessed Stephen, who returned thanks to God Almighty, and went in the night to the house of Olympius, who fell at his feet with his wife and son, entreating to be baptized, pointing to the fragments of the idols in token of his sincerity. Seeing this, blessed Stephen gave thanks to God, and catechised them in ecclesiastical tradition. He then baptized them, and of their household as many as believed, with their son, whom he called Theodulus, and offered sacrifice for their redemption. After the third day, this news was brought to Valerian and Gallienus, who forthwith ordered Nemesius and his daughter Lucilla, who had got her sight, to be slain at the temple of Mars, on the Via Appia, while Sempronius, Olympius, Exuperia, and Theodulus were burned to death, near the amphitheatre. They expired singing the praises of Christ, who had vouchsafed to associate them with his martyrs, and their remains having been collected by the clergy, were consigned to the tomb by blessed Stephen, with the accustomed hymns.\*

After many days, special edicts were issued by

\* Vid. Bar. ad ann. 259, No. 21—30.

Valerian and Gallienus for the apprehension and punishment of Stephen and the clergy of the Roman church : twelve of the latter were immediately seized ; and, without any hearing, put to death. Among them was that venerable priest named Bonus, or the good, who had made that glorious declaration when the clergy were addressed in the catacombs by Pope Stephen. Their bodies were collected, and laid near those of two other holy martyrs, in a crypt near the Via Latina, by Tertullian, freedman of Olympius. On learning this, the blessed Stephen sent for Tertullian, and having instructed him regarding the kingdom of God and life eternal, baptized him, and gave him in charge, while yet in his white robes, to a priest, who specially enjoined him to seek out the holy bodies of the martyrs. After two days, he was taken and brought before Valerian, where he was interrogated as to the property of Olympius, and having answered, and sustained every species of torture with heroical constancy, he was finally beheaded at the second mile-stone on the Via Latina. His remains were collected by the blessed Stephen, and interred in the same crypt.

Next day soldiers were sent to seize Stephen and the clergy who were with him, and when they had led him into the presence of Valerian, the emperor said, "It is you who are endeavouring to *overthrow the republic*, and by your persuasion to *induce the people to abandon the worship of the gods.*" To whom Stephen,—“I, indeed, do not overturn the republic ; but the people I admonish and exhort, that forsaking demons, whom they worship in their idols, they would pay homage to the true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent.” Then Valerian commanded him to be led to the temple of Mars, where his sentence was to be read from the tablets.

Then blessed Stephen having been led out of the city, on the Via Appia, when he had come to the temple of Mars, he said, lifting his eyes to heaven, “Lord God, and Father, who didst destroy the tower



of confusion at Babel, destroy this place, in which the devil deludes the people by superstition." It then began to thunder, and lightning in flashes struck the temple, which fell in part; and the soldiers having fled, Stephen, who remained alone, went with his attendant priests and deacon to the neighbouring cemetery of Lucina, where he encouraged the Christians to martyrdom by many exhortations. After this he offered sacrifice to the omnipotent God. The soldiers who were sent in pursuit found him in the act of celebrating the holy sacrifice; but without being terrified, he continued intrepidly to pursue the mysteries which he had commenced, until they struck off his head as he sat in the pontifical chair before the altar, on the 4th of the nones of August. Great was the lamentation made by the Christians at being deprived of so great a pastor, and they interred his body, with the chair drenched with his blood, in the same crypt, in the place called the cemetery of Callistus.\*

We learn from the 82nd letter of St. Cyprian, writing during his exile to the bishop Successus, that, after this, the persecution was urged on with redoubled fury in Rome, in pursuance of orders sent by Valerian to the senate, to the following effect:—that bishops, priests, and deacons were to be exterminated without formality or delay; that such of the senatorial or equestrian orders as were Christians should lose their dignity, besides being stripped of their properties; and, if persevering after all this, to be likewise put to death: females of rank, and Casarians, (a certain order of courtiers, or state pensioners,) to be stripped of every thing and banished. "Know also," he continues, "that Sixtus (the pope who had succeeded Saint Stephen) has suffered martyrdom in the catacombs, on the 8th of the ides of August,† and that throughout every region of the city, the deputies of the prefect are confiscating the goods, and

\* Vid. Bar. ad ann. 260, No. 3, 4.

† A. D. 261.

taking away the lives of all who are brought before them." \*

The affecting separation of Pope Sixtus from his clergy, and above the rest from his archdeacon Saint Lawrence, as he was led to martyrdom, has been celebrated by the eloquence of the fathers, and is thus described by St. Ambrose :—

" When St. Lawrence beheld the bishop Sixtus led to martyrdom, he began to bewail, not that the pontiff was led away, but that himself was left behind. Wherefore, he addressed him in these words : ' Father, where art thou going without thy son ; holy priest, whither dost thou proceed without a deacon ? It was not your custom to offer sacrifice without the assistance of a minister. What, then, in me, hath displeased thee, father ? Hast thou found me unfaithful ? Put to the test, at least, whether he whom you selected to be your minister was worthy of that choice ; or, after confiding to him the distribution of the blood of the Lord, and a share in the consummation of the sacraments, do you now refuse to let him share in the offering you are going to make of your own blood ?'

" Then Sixtus :—' Son, it is not that I forsake thee, or refuse the ministry of my disciple, but that you may remain for still more glorious trials. To the infirmity of our years, a smooth course and gentle contest is assigned ; to thy youthful vigour, a contest, and a triumph over the tyrant, full of glory. Cease to weep ; in three days (which you know is the canonical interval between our respective orders) the priest shall be followed by his Levite. Why complain of being excluded from a share in our martyrdom, when I leave to you the charge of our Lord's entire inheritance.' "†

\* "Huic persecutioni quotidie insistunt præfecti in urbe, ut, siqui sibi oblati, fuerint, animadvertantur, et bona eorum fisce vindicentur," &c.—*Cypr.* ep. 82.

† Ambrose de Off. l. i. 41.

## CHAPTER VI.

“ And the woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars, that cried, travailing in birth—fled into the wilderness, where there was a place prepared by God.”—*Apocal.* xii. 1—6.

THE end of Valerian, who, after being conquered by Sapor, king of Persia, and made a footstool of, was skinned alive, produced such an effect on his son and colleague, Gallienus, that he recalled the edicts of persecution.\* The bark of Peter was steered by Pope Dionysius during the interval of tranquillity,† in which Christian blood, however, did not cease to be shed in Rome; where the existing laws werè never permitted to slumber by the avarice of the city prefects and the bigotry of the pagan priests.‡

But even this partial lull of the tempest only caused it to break out with tenfold violence under Aurelian,§ when Pope St. Felix suffered; and, according to St. Leo the Great, there were crowned with martyrdom thousands of others beyond number.||

The succeeding pontiff, St. Eutychius, interred with his own hands no less than three hundred and forty-two martyrs;¶ to whom he was associated under the emperor Numerian.\*\*

In the times of his successor, Pope Caius, a new stratagem was resorted to, from which there appeared no possibility of escape. In every market-place and mart of traffic, or for provisions, small idols were set

\* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. vii. 14.

† A. D. 262.

‡ See for proofs Baron. ad ann. 285, Nos. 24 and 30.

§ A. D. 273. || Serm. ii. de Pent. “Innumera martyram millia.”

¶ A. D. 283. \*\* Martyr. Rom. ap. Bar. ad ann. 283, No. 14.



up, and no one was permitted to buy or sell without previously burning some grains of incense on the altars set before them; the same was insisted on at the mills before getting corn ground; nor was any one permitted to approach the fountains for water without a similar act of idolatry.

Therefore, say the same Acts, by counsel of the pontiff Caius, the recent converts were all received into his palace by the illustrious nobleman, Cromatius, and treated with the greatest kindness, so that none of them were exposed to the danger of being forced to sacrifice. But as it was impossible that the conversion of one so illustrious could be long kept private, during the rage of the persecution, (when the cupidity of informers was excited by immense rewards,) Cromatius managed by his influence to get a rescript authorising him to visit his estates in Campania, on the plea of recovering his health, and he invited all the Christians who wished it, to accompany him thither, in order to escape the fury of the times. There then arose a pious altercation between St. Polycarp and St. Sebastian, both eagerly claiming to remain in the post of danger, whereas it was necessary for one of them to accompany Cromatius. To whom the venerable pope Caius said, "By your both contending for the crown of martyrdom, you expose the people to be left destitute of consolation. Wherefore I think it expedient, that thou, brother Polycarp, long experienced in the duties of the priesthood, and filled with the gifts of theological science, do set out with the converts, in order to fortify their minds still recent and tender in the faith, and to remove the difficulties and scruples of the dubious." On hearing these words, the priest acquiesced, and bowed with serenity to the bland orders of the pope.

The Lord's day being therefore arrived, when the Pontiff Caius was celebrating the divine mysteries in the palace of Cromatius, where he had directed the Christians to assemble, he addressed them all in words like these:

“ Our Lord Jesus Christ, forestalling the weakness of human nature, constituted two grades of believers, to wit, confessors and martyrs ; that such as find themselves not equal to the full weight of the encounter, may hold to the grace of confession, cheering on the bold champions of Christ as they enter the lists for the honour of his name, and, by every means in their power, taking care of, and assisting them with solicitude. Let as many, therefore, as are inclined take their departure with our sons Cromatius and Tiburtius, and let the rest who prefer to remain with me in this city, remain ; for no space of earth can separate us, whom the grace of Christ has united ; nor shall our eyes be sensible of your absence, who shall be always present to our affections.”

As Pope Caius was speaking to this effect, Tiburtius, who was the son of Cromatius, a youth comely in person, but still more comely in mind, and but recently made a Christian like his father, began to cry out with a loud voice : “ I beseech thee, father, and bishop of bishops, constrain me not to turn my back upon the persecutors ; for it is to me very delightful, and desirable, to suffer a thousand deaths, if it were possible, for the true God ; provided only, that I may thereby attain to the dignity of that life of which no successor can deprive me, and which no duration can bring to an end.”

Then St. Caius shed tears of joy at this glorious out-burst of faith, and prayed that all who had remained with him, might be victorious in the contest, and bear away the crown of martyrdom. There were of the neophytes who chose to remain, Marcellianus and Marcus, with their father Tranquillinus, a man of rank. Also, the blessed Sebastian, and St. Tiburtius, Nicostratus, a head secretary, with his brother Castorius, whose wife Zoe remained with him ; Claudius, also, with his brother Victorinus, and his son Symphorianus who had been freed from the dropsy ; but all the others retired with Cromatius to his estates. Marcus and Marcellianus were immediately ordained

deacons by the Pontiff Caius; their father, Tranquillinus, he ordained priest, and the blessed Sebastian, whom the profession of arms enabled to be at large without being suspected, to the great advantage of the faithful, he appointed defender of the church; the rest he made sub-deacons.\*

But as no safe place of refuge could be found for them, they all lay concealed with Castulus, a Christian chamberlain of the imperial palace, who lived in one of the top stories. This retreat appeared secure, first, because the chamberlain and all his household were most zealous Christians; and secondly because, while the law regarding the sacrifices in the market places, and at the mills, and the fountains, was enforced with extreme rigour everywhere else, it was not minded within the precincts of the palace, where no one imagined there could be any Christians. All, therefore, as we have said, abode with holy pope Caius in the apartments of Castulus, and were occupied, day and night, with sighs and tears in prayer and fasting, entreating the Lord that they might be held deserving to suffer for his confession, and be admitted into the number of holy martyrs. But there came up to them, by stealth, religious men and women to entreat from these saints various graces of cures; for, through their intercession, the eyes of the blind were illuminated, health was restored to the sick, and demons expelled from the bodies of the possessed.†

Meanwhile it happened, matters being in this posture, that as the blessed Tiburtius was passing by,

\* "Ecclesiæ defensorem constituit," &c. This is the first mention of the order of defenders of the Church, of whom we meet with frequent notices in the epistles of St. Gregory the Great; theirs was a transitory office, and not an ecclesiastical order.—*Vid. Act. Sanct. Martyr. Sebast. et Socior. apud Bar.* ann. 286, No. 8.

† "Ascendebant autem ad eos, occulte, religiosi viri et fœminæ, quippe qui a sanctis diversas sanitatum gratias impetrarent; nam et cœcorum oculi illuminabantur eorum precibus, et salus reddebatur ægrotis, et de obsessis corporibus dæmones pellebantur."—*Ibid.* No. 10.



he saw a man who had fallen from such a height that all his bones and members were shattered, so that his parents were only thinking of his funeral; and addressing himself to them as they stood weeping, he said, "Let me speak a word to him, and perhaps he may recover." And when the crowd retired, he stooped down, and repeated the Lord's prayer and the creed, leisurely, over his wounds; and his bones became knit, his head and bowels were made whole and sound, as if nothing had ever happened to him.

Upon this Tiburtius was retiring, when he was laid hold of by the man's parents, who said, "Come, you must have him for your slave, and we will give you all we are worth along with him; for he was the only one we had, and you have restored him to us from death to life." To whom Tiburtius replied, "If you will only do what I shall tell you, I shall have made sufficient profit of this cure." "And if," said they, "you wish ourselves also for slaves, how shall we have the heart to contradict you? Nay, truly, it is our earnest desire, if you only deign to wish it."

Then taking their hands he led them aside from the crowd, and told the virtue of the name of Christ, and seeing their souls steady in the fear of God, he led them to the pontiff Caius, saying, "Venerable father, and prelate of the divine law, behold those two, who through me have been gained this day to Christ, in whom my faith, like a little young sapling, hath borne fruit for the first time." Then the holy pope Caius baptized the youth who had been cured, with his parents, giving thanks to God.

But passing over the many wonders of a like kind which Christ operated through their instrumentality, we should state how each of them obtained the martyr's palm.

Therefore, it occurred that as the blessed Zoe went on the natal day of the apostles to offer prayers at the tomb of St. Peter, she was seized by the Gen-

tiles, who were on the watch, and brought closely guarded to Petronius, who presided in that same region, called the region of the Naumachia, because of the lake that was there for the ship fights. They strove then to compel Zoe to burn incense to a small idol of Mars that was there ; to whom she answered, "To show that your god is a lover of impurity, you are eager to oblige a woman to sacrifice to him ; but dream not that the conduct of your most profligate goddess Venus is to be a pattern for one who carries the trophy of faith upon her forehead ; for it is not by any power of my own, but by the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ that I am enabled to set your tortures and your gods at defiance." Then Petronius ordered her to be confined in a dungeon of profound darkness, where she was not to see a ray of light, or receive any sustenance, for five days, superadding the menace, that this privation of light and food should be prolonged if she refused to sacrifice. But during that interval, those who were set to guard her dungeon heard her voice singing hymns of thanksgiving and praise to God. At the end of six days, the judge was reminded of her, when he was in a fury, and he commanded her to be suspended by her hair from a high tree, and a great smoke to be created under her by burning the most filthy and most fetid substances ; and scarcely had they done so, when she gave up her life. But the executioners taking her body, fastened to it a large stone, and flung it into the Tiber, "lest the Christians," said they, "come and take it away to make of her a goddess."

Having thus suffered, she appeared after her martyrdom to blessed Sebastian, in his sleep, and informed him of the manner of her trial ; which when he had narrated to the others, "Lo !" exclaimed Tranquillinus, "how we men are outstripped by women, who bear away the crown ; why do we cling to life ?" Wherefore, on the octave day of the apostles, as he was going to pray at the tomb of Saint Paul, the Gentiles lying in wait perceived him also ; and falling on

him, the multitude stoned him to death and cast his body into the Tiber.

Nicostratus, also with Claudius, Victorinus, and Symphorianus, were seized while seeking the bodies of the saints along the river banks, and taken before the city prefect, Fabianus, who exhorted them to sacrifice, but could gain nothing by ten days spent in alternate severities and blandishments. He, therefore, reported to the emperors (Diocletian and Maximian,) who ordered them to the torture for the third time; and when they could not be constrained by violence of torment, they were commanded to be brought out and cast into the sea. At this time, the Gentiles became so incensed against the faithful, that they could not bear even the mention of the Christian name.

In the interim, a certain one, called Torquatus, associated himself to the holy bishop Caius, pretending to be a Christian; but he was an apostate, fraught with duplicity in discourse, and, in all his actions, full of insidious cunning. But why attempt in many words to pourtray his wickedness? sufficient, that when he was upbraided by blessed Tiburtius—noble as he was learned and holy—with his personal vanity, with his incessant feasting in loose company, with procuring, by play, the means of gratifying his gluttony, with looking upon the beauty of women, with neglecting the fasts and offices of the church, and with indulging in sleep when he should rise to join in holy vigils with his brethren, and in singing hymns of praise to God,—when, I say, he was for these things severely reprehended by blessed Tiburtius, he pretended to listen with great compunction and gratitude to his admonitions, while in reality he laid a plan to have him seized by the Gentiles, as he was at prayer; so arranging it, that he should be also himself apprehended with him, and brought before the cruel judges.

When the judge perceived that the noble young Christian not only evaded the artful attempts of the traitor to make him apostatise, as he had planned to



do, but overwhelmed him with glowing indignation, he interposed between them, and said, "No longer disgrace your lineage, Tiburtius, nor pollute and degrade yourself by mingling with such contaminated dregs; but be what nature and your birth intended you to be, instead of exposing yourself to torture, infamy, and death." Tibertius said, "Oh, most sapient man, worthy to be constituted judge over Romans! because I refuse to adore the harlot Venus, Jove the profligate, Mercury the rogue, and Saturn the murderer of his own offspring, I, to be sure, disgrace my lineage, and brand my own character with infamy! And because I adore and venerate one true God, who reigneth in the heavens, you prepare to lacerate me with torments! But behold us ready; we refuse, resist not the torture; we will not deny Christ—Christ the Son of God, who descended from heaven to earth, that mortals might be able to ascend from earth to heaven."

Then Fabianus ordered burning coals to be cast before him, with the option, either to throw some grains of incense on them, or to walk upon them with naked feet. The latter alternative was instantly adopted by Tiburtius, after making the sign of the cross over the burning coals; and, as he moved over the fiery mass, he said to the prefect, "Divest yourself of infidelity, and learn that all creatures are subject to that God alone whom we adore. Try *you* to place your hand in boiling water, in the name of Jupiter, and let it be seen if this god of yours can defend you from pain; for as to me, these burning coals feel like a bed of roses, through the name of my Lord Jesus Christ."

Fabianus then sentenced him, as a blasphemer of the gods, to have his head struck off. All the others, the pious chamberlain who had sheltered them included, attained the same glorious crown; but the venerable pontiff escaped for eight years longer, shifting his abode from one crypt and catacomb to another, until, at length, on the 10th of the Kalends of May,

A. D. 296, he was slain, and interred in the cemetery of Callistus.\* After an interval of eleven days he was succeeded by Pope Marcellinus, during whose pontificate the ranks of the martyrs in Rome were swelled by immense numbers of the soldiery.

\* "Hic fugiens persecutionem Diocletiani, in cryptis habitans, confessor quievit martyrio coronatus post annos octo."—*Anastatius, in vit. Caii.*

## CHAPTER VII.

“Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: in all things, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and take unto you the helmet of salvation; and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”—*St. Paul to the Ephes.* vi. 15—17.

THE Christians, who abounded in the Roman armies, had been the first to experience the persecuting fury of Diocletian and his colleagues, particularly of Galerius, who, finding that neither the fear of losing their commissions, or of being disbanded, the penalties first resorted to, nor even wholesale slaughter, as in the instance of the Theban legion, could in any degree deter them from Christianity, made up his mind at once to chastise and subdue their obstinacy, by dooming them to ignominious and exhausting labours.\* “With this view,” according to the Acts of Marcellinus, “he withdrew all the Christian soldiers, whether of Roman or foreign extraction, from the ranks, and condemned them, some to mines, others to the sand-crypts, to raise materials for the construction of the immense baths which he was preparing to build in Rome, with a view to flatter his adoptive father, Diocletian, to whom he dedicated them. According to the provisions of the Roman law, such punishments were usually reserved for the most sordid delinquents;† and nothing more forlorn than the condition of those engaged in them can be conceived.

\* See Euseb. Eccl. Hist. book viii. ch. iv.

† “Si sordidiores personæ erunt, in opus publicum temporis dabis.”—*Paul. Jurisc. de Incend. Ruin. et Nonfr.*



“No attention is paid to their persons,” says a pagan writer ;\* “they have not even a piece of rag to cover themselves ; and so wretched is their condition, that every one who witnesses it deploras the excessive misery they endure. No rest, no intermission from toil is given either to the sick or maimed ; neither the weakness of age, nor woman’s infirmities, are regarded ; all are driven to their work with the lash, till at last, overcome with the intolerable weight of their afflictions, they expire in the midst of their toil ; so that these unhappy creatures always expect worse to come than what they endure at present, and long for death as far preferable to life.”

Touched by the anguish and privations of the captives, a noble and wealthy Christian, named Thrasus, used by stealth to send them various supplies of food and covering ; and the intelligence of this merciful interposition, on coming to the ears of the pontiff, so delighted him, that he selected Syriacus and Sisinus, who had been engaged in thus ministering to the poor Christian soldiers, to be deacons of the Roman church. They were soon after apprehended as they were on their way to the sand-crypts and quarries with provisions ; and, being brought before the officer of the watch, with their companions, were in the first instance, cast into prison, and ultimately, after a delay of three days, condemned to carry sand from the crypts to the thermæ on their shoulders.

The tortures endured by three Christian soldiers during this persecution have been accurately described by Macarius, Felix, and Verus, (faithful and pious men, who were eye-witnesses of their martyrdom,) and may be taken as a sample of what happened to the generality of their companions in arms.

The first of them being placed before the judge, and asked his name, made answer : “I am a Christian.” The judge rebuked him for making mention of that impious profession ; and a second time commanded

\* Diodor. Sicul.

him to tell his name. A second time the veteran replied : " I am a Christian." Then the judge commanded the lictors to strike him on the jaws heavily, repeating, while they struck him, " Answer not thus." " My name," observed the martyr, " I have told you ; but if it be the name given me by my parents you wish to know, it is Theracus ; if it be my military title, it is Victor."\* When every stratagem to induce the aged Theracus to offer sacrifice to the idols had proved unavailing, he was commanded to be stripped naked, and beaten with rods ; and while his body was under the lictors' strokes, he said to the judge that he felt comforted by his wounds, and rendered more and more confident in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second, being summoned and interrogated as to his name, replied : " Christian is my title of nobility ; in society I am called Probus." He also, on refusing to sacrifice, was stripped, and submitted to the burly strokes of the lictors, who scourged him with thongs of a raw hide.

While they were scourging him, the Centurion Demetrius cried : " O man, see how the ground is reeking with your blood !" " My body," said Probus, " is at your mercy ; but these stripes are to me as unguents." As the scourging still continued, " Well," said the judge, " do you abandon your folly, or still persevere in your obstinacy ?" " What you call folly is wisdom in the Lord," was the martyr's reply. " Turn him, and beat him on the stomach," said the judge. " O Lord, assist thy servant," he cried, while they beat him in this position. Then the judge commanded the lictors

\* The martyr was perfectly entitled according to law to answer as he did ; because the accused was allowed the privilege, when interrogated as to his name, to give whichever he chose of the several names or titles by which he might happen to be called. — " Sicuti in initio nominis, cognominis, prænominis impositio libera est ; ita eorum mutatio innocentibus periculosa non est. Mutare itaque nomen, vel prænomen, sive cognomen sine aliqua fraude licito jure, si liber es, secundum ea quæ sæpe statuta sunt, minime prohiberis, nullo ex hoc præjudicio futuro." — *Diocl. ad Julian. fr. l. i. C. de Muta. Nom. ap Baron. ann. 289. No. 3.*

to repeat with each stroke, "Where is thy helper?" Probus said, "He assists me, and will assist me; and through his aid I disregard your torments." "Attend to your carcass, miserable wretch," cried the president: "see how the ground is saturated with your blood!" "Know," replied the martyr, "that my scul is healed, made sound, and filled with strength in proportion as my body suffers for Christ's sake." "Chain his hands and feet," said the president, "throw him into his dungeon, and let no one get near to give him any comfort."

When the third was interrogated as to his name, he replied to the same effect as the others, that he was a Christian, but that his ordinary appellation was Andronicus, of one of the most noble families of Ephesus. He likewise refused to sacrifice; and while under the hands of the lictors, the president said: "Miserable youth, are you dead to all feeling, or why do you not take pity on your body?" And when the martyr derided this pretended compassion, the judge desired the lictors to fasten an instrument of torture on his mouth, and torture him energetically—"torquere os ejus fortiter.") After another fit of scourging, he said: "Turn him, and lacerate his sides;" and again: "Take that piece of broken pottery, and scrape his wounds." "It is now," said Andronicus, when they had done this, "that you have comforted my mangled frame." "Chain his neck to his feet, and keep him under guard," said the president. And thus closed the first trial of the three soldiers.

Theracus having stedfastly refused to sacrifice on the second day's trial, and, instead of yielding to the persuasion of the judge, continued to glory in being a Christian, the lictors were ordered to break his teeth. "Miserable wretch!" cried the judge; "see how thy teeth are shattered: have mercy on yourself." "Never shall you persuade me to sacrifice," replied Theracus, "though you cause every bone in my body to be crushed;" and when he had spoken thus, he continued silent. Then the lictors were ordered to strike



him on the mouth, saying at each stroke, "Respond." "My jaws," replied the aged martyr, "you have broken; how can I answer?" And when he again rejected the entreaties of the judge, who spared no argument to win him from his resolution, the executioners brought burning coals, and placed them, by order of the judge, on the palms of his hands. Then Theracus said: "Thy temporal fire I fear not, but the dread of eternal fire preserves me from yielding to your demands. Through the Divine aid, all that you have done to vanquish my resolution has only filled me with new strength." "Suspend him on high by the feet," said the president, "and create a dense fetid smoke, in which let him hang till he consents to sacrifice." "What care I for your smoke," said Theracus, "who have despised your fire?" "Fetch vinegar, mixed with salt," said the president, "and cast it in his nostrils." Thus also were Probus and Andronicus tormented, and with the same result.

On the third trial, when to the renewed exhortations and arguments of the judge, it was replied by Theracus, that the gods of which he spoke were reserved with those who served them to eternal torments; the judge cried out, "Infamous blasphemer, be silent! or thinkest thou to irritate me by thy impieties so that thou mayest escape with the loss of thy head?" "No," said Theracus, "for this would be only a compendium of suffering, whereas I am anxious for protracted agonies, that my faith in my Saviour may be increased."\* "I will have thee exterminated, bit by bit," said the judge, "and have the fragments of thy carcass flung to dogs; so that your vile female votaries may not be able to embalm you with aromatics, or unguents, as you expect."† Then the lictors were ordered to crush his face with blows, and to cut

\* "Aut putas tu, quia per impudentiam sermonum tuorum caput tibi abscindam et recedas. Theracus dixit; sic erat, ut compendio moriens non magnum agonem haberem: nunc autem fac, ut mihi in Domino crescat agonizatio fidei meæ."

† "Noli potari te semel damnari, sed *particulatim* te exterminabo, et reliquias tuas bestiis dabo. Putas quia mulierculæ aliquæ corpus tuum habent aromatibus vel unguentis condire, iniquissime!" &c.

away his lips. What they called the obelisks were then placed one on each side of his mangled face, and ignited ; but while thus tormented, the martyr said : " Even by greater torments than these you shall not be able to move the servant of God to adore ignominious idols."

" Bring the shears," said the judge, " and cut off his skin ; shave his head and place on it burning coals of fire." " Though you cause my entire body to be excoriated, I recede not from my God, who strengthens me to withstand thy attacks." " Bind up the obelisks," said the president ; " make them red hot, and put them under his armpits." And while Theracus was suffering thus, he cried, " Let the Lord look down and judge." " Of what Lord speakest thou, accursed wretch ?" " The Lord whom thou knowest not," said the martyr, " who rendereth to each according to his deeds." " Did I not tell thee," said the judge, " that I would thus exterminate thy carcass and put it out of the power of thy infamous Christian females to embalm thy relics in fine linen, and with perfumes ; for accursed as thou art, I will cause thee to be consumed, and thy ashes given to the winds." " And I said before, and now repeat," said Theracus, " do as you have a mind : for power is given to you in this life." " Drag him back to prison," said the judge, " and let him lie over for the next exhibition of wild beasts. Bring up the next."

When Probus could not be persuaded, the judge ordered flesh that had been immolated, and the wine of sacrifice to be brought, and to force them down his throat. " May the Lord look down," cried the martyr, " and behold from his throne on high how I suffer violence !" " Now, wretch," cried the judge, " see how, after all your sufferings, you have partaken of the sacrifice." " You have achieved no great thing," replied Probus, " in resorting to force ; the Lord looks to the will." After the torment of the obelisks, they took nails red hot from the fire and

drove them through his hands, in derision of the crucified. "I give thee thanks, O Lord," said the martyr, "that thou hast vouchsafed my hands should suffer in thy name." "Many torments make thee vain," said the judge. "And much power maketh thee, O judge, not only foolish but blind; for you know not what you do." Then the lictors were bid to thrust out his eyes and cast him back into his dungeon.

"Bring me out Andronicus," said the judge. "He is here, my lord," said Demetrius the centurion. "Consult for your youth, Andronicus, and sacrifice to the gods, like a pious man; yield, sacrifice to the gods, that you may be set free." But finding that these instances only excited the martyr's contempt, the judge in his rage resorted to new experiments of the most exquisite cruelty; and when the martyr triumphed amidst them all, saying, "I possess Christ the Son of God within me, and despise thee," he cried out, "Wretch! knowest thou not that we have the Acts of this malefactor, who was condemned by Pontius Pilate?"\* "Hold!" exclaimed the martyr, "for it is not lawful for thee to speak irreverently of that Being." Then they took meat from the idol altars, and wine of sacrifice, and as with Probus forced them down his throat. "Thrust an iron into his mouth," said the judge, "crush all his teeth; pluck out his blasphemous tongue; reduce it to ashes; scatter it far and wide, lest some accomplices of his impiety, or these female varlets, pick it up and guard it as something precious and sacred. As to the wretch himself, let him be kept with the other two for the next exhibition." "Tertia interrogatio absoluta est."†

As many of the soldiers as survived the completion

\* Alluding to the blasphemous forgery called the Acts of Pilate. See book iv.

† Vid. Baron. ad ann. 290, No. 2, et seq. The authenticity of these acts is beyond all doubt. It is hoped that the vivid insight afforded by them as to the intensity and variety of the torments endured by the martyrs, may incline the reader to be not displeased that they have been so diffusely cited.



of the baths, which were in progress of erection for seven years, and still remained unshaken in the Christian profession, were led out of the city to a place near the Salvian springs, called "Gutta jugiter manans;" and there, in a small plain confined by hills, were put to the sword, to the number of ten thousand two hundred and three, on the 7th of the Ides of July, A.D. 298.\*

But all that had as yet befallen the Christian church, during the ordeal of two hundred and fifty years, might be regarded but as mere preludes to persecution, when compared with the terrors that were now impending over it.

\* Vid. Bar. ad ann. 298, No. 10—28.

## CHAPTER VIII.

“ It was not in an amphitheatre, stained with the blood of wild beasts and gladiators, that the voice of compassion could be heard. The impatient clamours of the multitude denounced the Christians as the enemies of gods and men, doomed them to the severest tortures, and required with irresistible vehemence that they should be instantly apprehended and cast to the lions.”  
—*Gibbon's Hist. of Decl. and Fall*, ch. xvi. vol. ii. p. 205.

HAD it been told us by any less authority than that of an evangelist, that the arch-rebel, Lucifer, had so far succeeded in usurping the dominion of creation, as that all the kingdoms and glory of the world were at his disposal, and that his audacity could reach the pitch of even tempting our Lord himself to become his vassal and adorer; had this not been narrated, circumstantially, (as it has been by St. Matthew, in the fourth chapter of his gospel,) who could have presumed even to conjecture its possibility? He was rebuked; but this only set him to contrive, by the intervention of mortal agents, what he durst no longer hope for, or attempt by personal hostilities. Nay, even after the crushing force with which his machinations, through Judas and the Sanhedrim, had recoiled upon his own head, we find from the alarm sounded by the apostles, that the kingdom of Christ (destined to wrest from him his usurpations) had been scarcely founded, when it became the object of his infernal rage.\*

In this new enterprise, he was seconded by his ancient and well tried allies of the Jewish nation, with a zeal and perseverance, through every vicissitude

\* “ Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.”—*St. Paul to the Ephes.* vi. 12.

of disaster, deserving of their past enthusiasm in his service; but his chief reliance for success was rested on the colossal power of Rome; which, as it had grown up under his auspices, was stedfastly devoted to his interests. In every respect entitled to, and qualified for that distinction by the variety and perfection of his hell-born accomplishments, it was to the emperor Nero, the honour of heading the first general campaign against the new conscripts of the cross was allotted; and such renown did he acquire in that capacity, that for ages afterwards it was a popular impression among the Christians, that it was he who was to reappear again in the character of anti-Christ, for the last and most terrific trial of the elect.\* This assault, which should have been more than sufficient in itself, if not totally to extinguish, at least so to disable the infant and unresisting sect, as that it could never raise its head again, had been followed up by charge after charge, against the disciples of Christ, led on by the most mighty and ruthless of the Cæsars, with ever-augmenting destructiveness and fury; all orders of the empire, the senate, the knights, the pagan priesthood, and the Roman people, had not been wanting in any effort of physical or moral co-operation that could secure for these mighty and persevering attacks the most decisive triumph. How then account for it, that Christianity, at the opening of the fourth century, instead of being annihilated, had grown up into such power as not only to set the destroyer at defiance, but to fill him with well founded apprehensions that, the hour fatal to his long usurped dominion over Rome and the world was "making haste to come?"

The church now numbered among her children many of the best and most noble of all ranks, and if it should continue to gain in equal numbers from the ranks of idolatry, the destruction of this latter power was fast approaching. Prisca, the wife of Diocletian,

\* Lact. de Mort. Persec.



and her daughter Valeria, the wife of Galerius, were Christians. The highest officers of the court, such as Dorotheus and Gorgonius, and magistrates of the first rank, (in the provinces, but not in Rome,) made public profession of the Christian faith. The old oratories, or chapels, had become too small for the number of the faithful, and in every city (except Rome) others more spacious and more elegant were erected.\*

By these and similar reflections the arch-enemy of Heaven was excited to rally and rouse up all his forces for one more assault, vehement, universal, and not to be relaxed in, while a vestige of the Christian religion remained uncrushed.

Diocletian, who had set himself up, under the title of Jovius, to be worshipped as the supreme God; Maximin the elder, in whom all were commanded to believe that the god Hercules had revealed himself for the defence and adoration of the empire; Maximian Galerius, another Hercules, with his kindred deity, Maximin Hercules, or Daza, as he was called while he yet herded cattle,—these, with Maxentius, the worthy son and successor of the elder Maximian, were his chief agents in this enterprise; and each of them in his peculiar province, so far as activity, perseverance, and ardour in the cause could give a title to it, did not fail to prove himself deserving, in an eminent degree, of the confidence reposed in him by the “prince of darkness.”†

Strictly speaking, this war of extermination against the church of Christ, was proclaimed at Rome, with all the suitable formalities, on occasion of the great Circensian games which were opened by the emperor

\* See Döllinger, *Hist. of the Church*, &c. vol. i. p. 91; Dr. Cox's translation. In addition to the above, many other passages to the same effect may be seen in Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* book viii. ch. 1.

† So entitled by St. Paul. By our Lord the fallen spirit is usually called “the prince of this world,” in allusion to the usurpation he had established, chiefly through the means of paganism.—See St. John xiv. 30.

Maximian Hercules, on returning from Africa, with more than ordinary pomp.

The festival commenced, as usual, on the Capitol by a variety of sacrifices and religious ceremonies ; and, when these had been duly performed, the entire Roman state and people commenced to move through the forum, and along the way of triumphs in solemn procession, to the Circus Maximus. The youth and beauty of both sexes, the tribes of the "gens togata," the senators in their robes, the magistrates in their gorgeous costumes and insignia of their respective offices ; Augurs, Haruspices, Quindecemviri, Epu-lones, and Augustals, according to their colleges ; the Ambarvales crowned with ears of corn ; the Curiones, Fecials, and Titienses, according to their companies ; the Rex Sacraficulus, or King of Sacrifices ; the Flamens, with their caps or fillets ; the Flamen Dialis, or priest of Jupiter, distinguished by a lictor, curule chair, and toga prætexta ; the Flamen of Mars ; the Flamen of Quirinus ; the Salii, accoutred with sword, spear, and buckler, as they bounded along ; the Lupercals, priests of Pan, in three divisions—Fabians, Quintilians, and Julians ; next came the Palatii and Privarii, priests of Hercules, instituted by Evander ; the priests of Cybele, called Corybantes, making a great noise with drums and cymbals, shouting, dancing, and beating themselves to the sound of a flute. The procession closed with the Vestal virgins, an order of priestesses derived by Numa Pompilius from Abba Longa, because the mother of Romulus and Remus had been a Vestal.

As they proceeded through the forum, along the "Via Sacra," all the way to the circus, various rites and sacrifices continued to be offered upon altars erected and lighted up on either side of the entire line of progress. When arrived in the circus, and that the emperor, with his court, the nobles with their attendants, the knights and citizens, were stationed in their appointed places along the interminable benches strewed with gorgeous cushions, and rising,

tier above tier, to the rich awning that shaded them from the sun, the gods of Rome, with their multifarious symbols and regalia, were borne round the circus to the sound of music; new hecatombs were offered, and then they commenced the Circensian sports.\*

By order of the emperor, a great quantity of large trees, torn up by the roots, were transplanted into the midst of the circus. The spacious and shady forest was immediately filled with a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, a thousand fallow deer, and a thousand wild boars; and all this variety of game was abandoned to the riotous impetuosity of the multitude. The tragedy of the succeeding day consisted of the massacre of a hundred lions, an equal number of lionesses, two hundred leopards, and three hundred bears. Besides these, twenty zebras displayed their elegant forms and variegated beauty to the eyes of the Roman people; ten elks, and as many cameleopards, the loftiest and most harmless creatures that wander over the plains of Sarmatia and Æthiopia, were contrasted with thirty African hyænas, and ten Indian tigers. The mailed rhinoceros and the river horse, with a variety of other most singular wild beasts, were not wanting in this display of savage nature, which was closed by a majestic troop of thirty-two elephants.†

Then followed contests of agility and strength—running, leaping, throwing the discus or quoit, boxing with gauntlets embossed with iron to make the strokes more severe, wrestling, and other displays of

\* Tertullian glances at the several groups of the procession, the sacrifices by which it was preceded, accompanied, and concluded, and at the idols carried on thrones, or in chariots, with their various symbols, &c. &c. :—"De simulacrorum serie, de imaginum agmine de curribus, de thensis, de armamaxis, de sedibus, de coronis, de exuviis, quanta præteria sacra, quanta sacrificia præcedunt, intercedant, succedant, quot collegia, quot sacerdotia, quot officia moveantur, sciunt homines ILLIUS URBIS IN QUA DÆMONIORUM CONVENTUS CONSEDIT."—*Tertul. de Spectaculis*.

† See Hist. of the Decl. and Fall, &c., ch. xii. p. 411 of vol. i.



gymnastics—so called, because the champions were naked in these exhibitions, and their bodies were anointed with a glutinous unguent called “ceroma,” laid on by the “aliptæ,” a certain class of slaves.

The chariot and horse-races, as crowning the climax of ecstasy for the Romans, were reserved for the finale of the games. From the morning to the evening, careless of the sun or of the rain, the spectators remained in eager attention, their eyes fixed on the horses and charioteers, their minds agitated with hope and fear for the success of the colours which they espoused; and the happiness, nay, the very existence of Rome and the empire seemed to hang on the event of every race.\* The charioteers, a class of beings only second to the immortal gods in popular estimation, were at this time divided into six companies, called factions, each faction distinguished by its own proper colour. There was the “factio alba,” or the whites; the “factio rusata,” or the scarlets; the “factio veneta,” or the sky-blues; the “prasini,” or green faction; the “aurati” and “purpurei,” or the golden and purple factions added by Domitian. In Rome, every body belonged to some one or other of these factions; with high and low, among the females as well as among the men, the discussion of their rival merits formed an inexhaustible source of broils and controversies, not unfrequently conducted with such vivacity, that, passing from criticism, chitchat, and arguments, to handcuffs, and even to deadly weapons, the benches of the circus from end to end, became the scene of sanguinary tumult and massacre.†

It was on the 15th of the kalends of May, in the year of redemption 303, during one of these paroxysms of brutal excitement, that the terrific shout, so often heard in circus and amphitheatre before, resounded from the infuriated myriads, as they rose by a simul-

\* Juvenal, Sat. ii. 101; also Ammian. Marcel., and Hist. of Decl. and Fall, ch. xxxi.

† “No less than 30,000 people are said to have lost their lives on one of these occasions.”—*Proc. in Rel. Pers.*

taneous impulse.—“Away with the Christians!” was twelve times repeated by a chorus of four hundred thousand bloodthirsty voices. This was followed by ten rounds of “Death and extermination to the Christians!” “Wherefore,” concludes the Record, “it was reported to the senate by Eugenius Hermogenianus, the Prætorian prefect, that a persecution against the Christians should be decreed; and the persecution,” says the same document, “was decreed accordingly.”\*

Instead of attempting any detailed description of the scenes that followed all over the provinces of Maximian, and over the whole Roman world after the edict of Nicomedia, we subjoin a passage from the great St. Basil on the subject.

“The houses of the Christians were wrecked, and laid in ruins; their goods became the prey of rapine, their bodies of the ferocious lictors, who tore them like wild beasts, dragging their matrons by the hair along the streets, callous alike to the claims to pity of the aged, or of those still in tender years. The innocent were submitted to torments usually reserved only for the blackest criminals. The dungeons were crammed with the inmates of the Christian homes that now lay desolate; and the trackless deserts and the forest caves were crowded with fugitives whose only crime was the worship of Jesus Christ. In these dark times, the son betrayed his father, the sire impeached his own offspring, the servant sought his master’s property by denouncing him, the brother sought his brother’s blood; for none of the claims or ties of humanity seemed any longer to be recog-

\* “Quum Maximianus Herculius Romæ esset, et xv. kal. Majas in circo maximo spectaret circenses ludos, sexto misso, veneto (one of the blues,) vincente, acclamatus est in circo: ‘CHRISTIANI TOLLANTVR!’ dictum est duodecies. Iteratumque: ‘Augustes, CHRISTIANI NON SINT!’ clamatum decies. *Exquo factum est*, ut Eugenius Hermogenianus præfectus prætorio retulerit in senatu de persecutione in Christianos decremendâ. Decernitur in senatu persecutio.”

Ex actis S. Sabini Ep. Spoletini—“Quæ quidem sincerissimæ sunt.”—*Bar. Ann.* 301, No. 18.

nised, so completely had all been blinded, as if by a demoniac inspiration. Moreover, the house of prayer was profaned by impious hands ; the most holy altars were overturned ; nor was there any offering of the clean oblation, nor of incense ; no place was left for the Divine mysteries ; all was profound tribulation ; a sable darkness that shut out all comfort ; the sacerdotal colleges were dispersed ; no synod or council could meet for terror of the slaughter that went on everywhere ; but the demons celebrated their orgies, and polluted all things by the smoke and gore of their victims.”\*

\* Orat. in Gordium Mart.



## CHAPTER IX.

"Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time."—*Apocal.* xii. 12.

FROM Rome through every province, city, and hamlet of the empire, this frenzied resolve to root out and exterminate the Christians diffused itself; and during the course of ten long years, (the blackest in the annals of a wofully perverted race,) never paused but to devise, or make experiment of, some new species of atrocity. To the magistrates, not only in cities and great towns, but in every petty village and country part, there was given the most despotic power, and unrestricted license to plunder, imprison, torture, and destroy the Christians; and the magistrates, in their turn, delegated the plenitude of their authority in this behalf, to each and every one who chose to exercise it; "free leave being granted to all persons who would be injurious towards them. And, moreover, it was proclaimed to the multitude," says the same holy martyr, "that no one should have any care or pity for us; but that all persons should so think of, and behave themselves towards us, as if we were no longer men."\*

Eye-witnesses, in minutely describing the various torments which were resorted to in order to subdue the constancy of the martyrs, their numbers, (surpassing all power of computation,) their superhuman endurance and magnanimity under their trials;—in describing these things, as well as the astounding

\* Ep. of St. Philias. Mart. quoted by Euseb. Eccl. Hist. book viii.; see also Maximin's first revocation of the edicts, ap. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. book ix. ch. i.

manifestations of the Divine interpositions in their favour, the historians pause from time to time, to state their deliberate conviction, that what they and millions of their contemporaries had witnessed, will be regarded as incredible by posterity.\*

In addition to these efforts of physical violence, the most infamous forgeries and aspersions were resorted to, in order to foster and create aversion to the persecuted creed. Certain Acts, purporting to be a report by Pontius Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius, relative to our blessed Lord,† and replete with the most blasphemous impieties, having been concocted with all possible ingenuity, were published all over the empire, with a mandate to have them inscribed on bronze tablets, and posted in all public places, both in town and country. Besides this, they seized on certain females of abandoned character, and by menaces and bribery, induced them to make pretended confessions corroborative of the slanders with which the Christians had been constantly assailed; and these confessions, together with the Acts of Pilate, were sent to all schoolmasters and teachers of youth, with injunction to have them committed to memory by their pupils, and made the subject of declamation every day; "so that, all day long," says Eusebius, "the boys in the schools had nothing in their mouths, but the blasphemies of those Acts which were forged against us."‡

In fine, so utterly impossible did it appear to be, that the Christian church could any longer subsist, or continue in any manner to escape being totally

\* See Euseb. chap. iv. of his "Book concerning the Martyrs of Palestine," and in sundry other places.

† Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. ix.

‡ Book ix. chap. 6, 7. See the 9th chapter of the 2nd book of the Ecclesiastical History for the refutation of this foul device. The forged Acts state that the crucifixion occurred when Tiberius was consul for the fourth time, that is, in the seventh year of his reign; whereas, it appears from Josephus, that Pilate was not made governor of Judea till the 12th year of Tiberius. "Sic mentita est iniquitas sibi."

annihilated, that in the security and unhesitating anticipation of the event, inscriptions were set up in various places, to commemorate, among the other exploits of the emperors, that they had "destroyed the Christian name," and had not left a single vestige or "trace of the superstition of the Christians."\*

Far, however, from realizing these anticipations, in themselves so natural, these mighty efforts to destroy the church of Christ only served to prove its indestructibility, to augment the lustre of its triumphs; and, so to shatter and disable the empire of paganism, that its most infatuated votaries could not help perceiving that it was fast nodding to its fall.

As to the numbers who were massacred and tortured to death, they are frequently styled, by Eusebius, "an innumerable company throughout every province."† In the Thebais alone, he himself beheld during a succession of years, ten, twenty, thirty, sixty, of a day put to death; "and again at another time, an hundred men, together with very small children and women were killed in one day, being condemned to various and interchangeable sorts of punishments; insomuch that the executioner's sword became blunt, and being rendered unfit for use, was broken, and the executioners themselves being tired, succeeded one another by turns. At which time, also," he continues, "we beheld a most admirable ardour of mind, and a truly divine strength and alacrity in those who believed

\* The two following inscriptions were first published from ancient marbles, by Gruter, p. 280.

## I.

DIOCLETIANUS . IOVIUS . ET .  
MAXIMIANUS . HERCULEUS .  
CÆS. AVGG.  
AMPLIFICATO . PER . ORIEN .  
TEM . ET . OCCIDENTEM .  
IMP . ROM.  
ET .

NOMINE . CHRISTIANORUM .  
DELETO . QUI . REMP . EVER-  
TEBANT.

## II.

DIOCLETIAN . CÆS.  
AUG . GALERIO . IN . ORI-  
ENTE . ADOPT . SUPERS-  
TIONE . CHRIST .  
UBIQUE . DELETA . ET . CUL-  
TU . DEORUM . PROPAGATO .

† Book concerning MM. of Palestine, chap. 13.



in Christ ; for no sooner was sentence pronounced against the first, but others ran hastily from some other direction to make loud profession of their faith, before the judges' tribunal."\* From an ancient catalogue published by Papebrochius, it appears that, in thirty days, 15,000 were put to death ;† and yet we find Pope Marcellus, to make a new division of parishes in Rome, increasing them to the number of twenty-five, in order to meet the religious exigencies of his people, who thus multiplied beneath the sword.‡

The hideous and execrable character of the barbarities to which the Christians were subjected with a view not only to force them to apostatize, but to deter all others from embracing the proscribed belief, had the very contrary effect. As to the martyrs, persons of both sexes and of the tenderest and most infirm age not only bore them with superhuman fortitude, but hailed them with joy, and bantered the impotent rage of the pro-consuls and their lictors ; while the pagans themselves were forced to applaud the heroism of those whom they so bitterly hated, and to feel disgusted and afflicted at the atrocities they used before to be so vociferous in demanding.

The pro-consular acts of the martyrs Tharasius, Probus, and Andronicus, already noticed, supply a striking instance. These martyrs had been tortured, first, at Tarsus of Cilicia, in a most cruel manner ; conveyed from thence to Mopsueste, they were again submitted to the most horrible barbarities ; and, a third time, they were tormented at Anazobus ; so that being covered all over with wounds, and their bones being broken and wrenched from the sockets,

\* Book viii. chap. 9.

† Apud Peverelli, l. xi. No. 59.

‡ " Hic (Marcellus Papa) fecit cæmeterium via Salaria, et viginti-quinque titulos in urbe constituit, *quasi diæceses*, propter baptismum et pœnitentiam multorum, qui convertibantur ex paganis et propter sepulturas martyrum."—*Ex lib. Pontif. in vit. morul.* Thus, while a new cemetery was required to inter the martyrs, additional clergy were required to baptize the converts, and hear their confessions, &c. See Baron. ad ann. 307, No. 4.

when the governor Maximus wished to have them finally exposed in the amphitheatre to wild beasts, it became necessary for the soldiers to press men from the streets, in order to carry thither their almost lifeless bodies.

“When we beheld this,” say the three devout Christians who wrote the acts, and interred the relics of the martyrs, “we turned away our faces and wept; but when their mangled frames were cast down from the men’s shoulders on the arena, all the spectators were horrified at the sight, and began to murmur at the president for this order. And many of them rose up and left the spectacle, expressing their dislike of this ferocious cruelty; on which Maximus told his guards, who were near him, to take down the names of all who acted thus, that they might be afterwards brought to an account. He then commanded the wild beasts to be let loose upon the martyrs; and when they would not touch them, he ordered the keepers to be scourged. A bear was then let out, which had devoured three men of a day; but crouching at the feet of Andronicus, it began gently to lick his wounds, and continued thus mildly to demean itself, notwithstanding that the martyr plucked its hair, and tried to irritate the animal to devour him. Then the president in a fury ordered the lancers to run the bear through the body; and Terentianus, (the editor of the games,) dreading the president’s anger, determined to make sure, by letting in upon the martyrs a lioness that had been sent from Antioch by Herod; but the lioness, to the terror of the spectators, began to fetch bounds up to where they were reclining; and when at length she came to the martyrs, as it were, kneeling down before Theracius, who dragged and annoyed her, she seemed by cowering down submissively to attest her veneration, conducting herself less like a lioness than a lamb. Shouts of admiration burst forth from the whole amphitheatre, overpowering Maximus with confusion; who screamed to the keepers to infuriate and goad on the

lioness. But she, with another bound, broke through the palisade back to her den, and the manager, Terentianus, was ordered to proceed, without further interlude, with the gladiators; directing them, first, to despatch the martyrs with their swords.”\*

Several other instances of a like description are recorded by Eusebius as having been witnessed by himself, especially in 7th chapter of his 8th book, wherein he describes the most furious wild beasts as unable to harm the Christians, and turning on the pagans with destructive rage. “Sometimes, indeed, they rushed upon the naked and defenceless champions of Christ,” he says, “but checked as if by some divine force, they retired back to their dens. This happening repeatedly, excited the wonder of the spectators; at whose demand, the first wild beast having been abashed, a second and third was sent against the same martyr; but to no effect.

“You would have been filled with admiration,” he continues, “of the stedfast intrepidity of these holy champions, and of that immovable fortitude which was displayed by persons of the most tender years. You might have seen one youth, who had not yet completed his twentieth year, standing in the midst of the arena with his hands stretched forth in the form of a cross as he prayed with intense eagerness to God, and not moving the slightest, or shrinking from the spot in which he stood; even when the bears and leopards breathing forth rage and death, almost touched his very flesh with their jaws. Again, you might have seen others cast to an enraged bull, who tore some of the infidels who came near him; tossing them with his horns into the air, and leaving them to be taken away half dead. But when, with rage and bellowing, he rushed upon the martyrs, he could not approach them; but stamping on the ground with his feet, tossing his horns this way and that way, and breathing forth rage and madness by reason of

\* Vid. Bar. ad ann. 290, No. 2—32.



his being irritated by red-hot goads, he was, in despite of all, held back by an invisible hand. Other wild beasts having been tried to no purpose, they were at last put to death by the sword; and their relics, instead of being interred, were consigned to the surges of the deep."

Not less effectual than these astonishing interventions of Divine power, in breaking down the hatred of the pagans, were the celestial displays of charity on the part of the Christians, both in praying loudly and fervently for their persecutors from the midst of their torments, and in risking their lives to solace and to serve them during the scourges of plague and famine that fell upon the guilty empire during this interval.

"Thus death, fighting with the two first-mentioned weapons," says Eusebius, "to wit, the pestilence and famine, did in a short time destroy whole families; insomuch that you might have seen two or three bodies at a time carried out from the same house together to the grave. During these deplorable times, all the heathens had evident demonstrations of the care and piety of the Christians exhibited towards all men; for, in reality, it was only by the Christians that true compassion and good nature were manifested amidst so many and great calamities on all sides. Some of them employed themselves daily in taking care of, and in burying the dead; for vast numbers died whose funerals nobody took care of. Others gathered together in one body all those in the city who lay under pressure of the famine, and distributed food to them all; so that when the fame of this action was rumoured amongst all men, they all glorified the God of the Christians."\*

The iniquity of slaughtering a people so elevated above humanity by their virtues, at length not only became intolerable to the heathens, but (as would seem from what is so confidently narrated by contem-

\* Eccl. Hist. book ix. ch. 8. See also book concerning MM. of Palest. ch. 8.

porary writers) wrung tears of compassion from the hardest marble.

Orders had been issued to have the bodies of the martyrs that had been cast abroad to be devoured by beasts of prey, carefully guarded day and night, to prevent their obtaining the rites of burial; and you might have seen for many days together, no small number of men sedulously executing this savage and barbarous command; some of whom, as if this had been a matter of high concern and moment, watched on a tower, that the dead might not be stolen away. Also, the wild beasts, dogs, and the birds that prey on flesh, scattered, here and there, pieces of the human bodies, and the whole city was strewed round about with men's bowels and bones; so that nothing did ever seem more cruel and horrid even to those who before had been our enemies. All persons bewailing not so much the calamitous condition of those towards whom these things were done, as the opprobrium put upon themselves and upon mankind in general.

"After these horrid barbarities had been practised many days together, there happened this miracle. The weather was fair, the atmosphere was clear, and the whole face of heaven most serene and bright; when, on a sudden, from all the columns which supported the public galleries throughout the city, there fell many drops in the form of tears, and the forum and streets (no moisture having distilled from the air) were wet and bedewed with water from some unknown source; insomuch, that a report was immediately spread among all the inhabitants, that the earth, unable to bear the horrid impieties then committed, did, in this inexplicable manner, shed tears; and that the stones and senseless matter wept at what was done, in order to reprove the savage and merciless propensities of man. I make no doubt," concludes Eusebius, "but that this will be looked upon as fabulous, and a ridiculous story by future generations; but they did not account it such, who had the

certainly thereof confirmed to them by the authority of the times in which it happened.”\* And certainly, no matter how the phenomenon itself may be accounted for, the interpretation put upon it by the pagans must ever remain to attest the moral triumph achieved over the minds and sympathies of their persecutors by the Christians.

\* Book concerning the Martyrs of Palest. ch. ix.



## CHAPTER X.

“ The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, to slay the upright of heart, their sword shall enter into their own hearts, and their bow shall be broken.”—*Psalm xxxvii.* 14, 15.

BUT they were crowned by the fame of victories more sublime and heavenly than even these.

Even in the fourth century, according to St. Jerome, there was no people possessed of a literature or a language amongst whom the renown of St. Agnes was not celebrated, there was no portion of the church that did not re-echo with hymns and canticles in her praise. In expatiating on her memory, the eloquence of the Latin fathers seems to become more redolent even than usual of holiness and purity; and the chaste muse of the Christian poet catches her most seraphic inspiration, in kneeling beside this virgin's shrine. The very name of Agnes became the talisman of chastity.\*

Yet, it was this creature, too pure for earth, in the first bloom of girlhood, beautiful and immaculate as an angel, that the fiendish spirit of paganism commanded to be stripped naked by ruffian hands, and dragged before Aspesius, the prefect or viceroy of Rome, with the alternative either to sacrifice to the gods, or be exposed in the Lupanar. But in this extremity the indignant angels of Christ protected his spotless handmaid; and so quelled and smote that countless herd of libertines and savage-hearted ruffians, gathered and massed together there, from every

\* “*Omnium gentium linguis atque literis, præcipue in ecclesiis Agnes vita laudata est.*”—*St. Hier. ep. viii. ad Demetriad. Op. tom. i.* See also S. Aug. *Serm. cclxxiii. cap. vi.*, and S. Ambr. *l. i. de Virgin. cap. 2.*, and Prudentius, *Περὶ στεφανῶν*, hymn xiv.

school of debauchery and brutality, that they durst not so much as lift their eyes from the earth; but, as the wild beasts had been constrained to respect the defenceless martyrs, and even to pay them homage, so were the merciless and hateful lusts of profligates compelled to worship chastity in this peerless and most heavenly virgin. Victorious not only over the unmanly tyrant who thought to subdue, by the dread of contamination, that soul for which, he soon discovered that neither tortures, nor a thousand deaths for the sake of Christ, had any terrors; but also after humbling in the dust, those furious demons of the flesh that were Satan's forlorn hope; the tender, the innocent, spotless Agnes bowed her snowy neck with rapture; and radiant with smiles of ecstasy solicited, and at length received from the lictor's hatchet, the stroke that soon veiled her peerless form in the royal robe of martyrdom.\*

Nor was it enough that Christianity should be thus crowned with victory, its most deadly enemies were to be constrained to proclaim its triumph, and their own confusion.

Not one of the persecuting emperors, or of their most zealous underlings, escaped the visible strokes of Divine vengeance. Diocletian was consumed by a noisome, lingering, malady, and died mad. "The other who was next to him in honour," says Eusebius, that is the elder Maximian, "put an end to his own life by hanging of himself, agreeably to a certain

\* "Haud, inquit, Agnes, immemor est ita  
Christus suorum, perdat ut aureum  
Nobis pudorem, nos quoque deserat.  
Ferrum impiabis sanguine si voles;  
Non inquinabis membra libidine."

*Prud. Hymn. Cit.*

In his notice of St. Agnes, the learned Ruinart was obliged to confine himself to the sources already noticed; but in the course of his researches in the Vatican library, the illustrious prelate Evodius Assemani discovered the authentic acts of St. Agnes, in a most ancient Chaldaic manuscript, which he judged to have been written by a contemporary, and not improbably by Eusebius of Cæsarea. Vide Acta Martyr. Orient. par. ii. p. 148.

diabolical prediction promising him that fate, on account of his many and most audacious villanies." As to Daza or Maximin, who forged the Acts of Pilate, "being tortured with most grievous and acute pains," says the same writer, "he fell upon his face on the ground, and was destroyed by want of food; all his flesh being melted away by an invisible fire, sent upon him from heaven; insomuch that when his flesh was wholly wasted away, the entire shape and figure of his former beauty quite disappeared, and all that was left of him was his parched bones, which looked like a skeleton that had been long dried. So that those about him judged his body to be nothing but the grave of the soul buried in a carcass already dead, and wholly putrified. And when the violent heat of his distemper scorched him with a greater vehemence even to the very marrow of his bones, his eyes leapt out of his head, and, deserting their proper station, left him blind. After all this, he yet drew his breath, and having given thanks (to the hand that smote him) and made his confession (like Antiochus) to the Lord, he called on death, acknowledging these his sufferings due for his contempt and impiety against Christ."\*

But, as Galerius had been the chief instigator of the persecution, upon him the judgment fell heaviest. Lactantius has left a description of the horrors by which he was eaten alive, so hideous as not to bear transcription; suffice it to say, he died the death of Herod, the first persecutor of Jesus Christ. "These diseases," says Eusebius, "did spread incurably, and eat their way into his inmost bowels, from which were generated an unspeakable multitude of worms, and a most noisome stench proceeded therefrom; for before his decease, the whole mass of flesh upon his body (by reason of the abundance of food he devoured) was grown to immense fatness, which being then putrified, became an intolerable and most horrid spectacle to those that approached him. Wherefore, some of the

\* Eccl. Hist. book ix. ch. 10.



physicians, being unable to endure the exceeding noisomeness of the smell that came from him, were killed; others of them, when they could administer no remedy (the whole fabric of his body being swelled and past all hopes of a recovery) by his orders were cruelly slain." \*

It was while under these torments that he published the edict given by Eusebius,† in which he not only revokes the decree of persecution, and grants liberty of conscience, and the public exercise of their religion to the Christians, but implores that, in return for this boon, they will "supplicate their God for his recovery." In like manner was Maximin, who, in his edict, had reviled Christianity as an "accursed imposition and fanaticism," a "pernicious folly," a "blind error," an "execrable superstition,"‡ compelled to publish the formal retractation of his impious and iniquitous edicts.

"A copy of the tyrant's decree in favour of the Christians, translated (by Eusebius) out of the Latin (the legal dialect of the Roman empire) into Greek:—

"EMPEROR CÆSAR CAIUS VALERIUS MAXIMINUS GERMANICUS, SARMATICUS, PIOUS, FELICITOUS, INVINCIBLE AUGUSTUS.

—"We at such time as it came to our knowledge, that, in pursuance of an edict issued by our parents, their most sacred majesties Diocletian and Maximian, whereby it was decreed, that the assemblies of the Christians should be utterly abolished, many extortions and rapines were committed by the Beneficarii,§ and that these hardships inflicted on our subjects (whose peace and quiet is our choicest care) had increased exceedingly; their goods and possessions being on this pretence wasted: by our letters written last year to our presidents of every province, we decreed,—That

\* Book viii. ch. 16.

† Book viii. ch. 17.

‡ Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. book ix. ch. 7.

§ Βενεφικάρριοι.—These were soldiers promoted from the ranks by the tribunes; they were privileged from several duties and military hardships, according to Vegetius.

if any one had a desire to follow that sect, or adhere to the prescriptions of that religion, HE MIGHT, WITHOUT IMPEDIMENT, PERSIST IN HIS RESOLUTION, AND NOT BE HINDERED OR PROHIBITED BY ANY MAN; AND THAT EVERY ONE SHOULD FREELY DO WHAT PLEASED HIM BEST (with respect to his creed) WITHOUT THE LEAST FEAR OR SUSPICION.

“ But it could not now escape our knowledge, that some of our judges did misapprehend our commands, and caused our (Christian) subjects to distrust and doubt our decrees, and made them more slow and fearful in the resumption of those religious solemnities which they approved of as best. Now, therefore, that all jealousies, ambiguities, and fears may for the future be removed, we have decreed that this our edict be published :—

“ WHEREBY ALL MEN MAY KNOW,

“ THAT THEY WHO DESIRE TO FOLLOW THIS SECT AND RELIGION ARE ALLOWED BY THIS OUR GRACIOUS INDULGENCE TO APPLY THEMSELVES TO THAT RELIGION WHICH THEY HAVE USUALLY FOLLOWED, IN SUCH A MANNER AS IS ACCEPTABLE AND PLEASING TO EVERY ONE OF THEM. MOREOVER, WE DO PERMIT THEM TO REBUILD THEIR CHAPELS. Moreover, that this our indulgence may appear the larger and more comprehensive, it has pleased us to make this sanction : THAT IF ANY HOUSES OR ESTATES (WHICH FORMERLY BELONGED TO AND WERE IN POSSESSION OF THE CHRISTIANS) AND ARE, BY THE EDICT OF OUR PARENTS (DIOCLETIAN AND MAXIMIAN) DEVOLVED TO THE RIGHT OF THE EXCHEQUER, OR ARE SEIZED UPON BY ANY CITY, OR SOLD, OR HAVE BEEN SOLD, OR HAVE BEEN GRANTED AND BESTOWED UPON ANY ONE AS A TOKEN OF IMPERIAL FAVOUR; WE HAVE DECREED, THAT THEY SHALL BE RESTORED TO THE ANCIENT TENURE AND POSSESSION OF THE CHRISTIANS.”

“ These,” pursues Eusebius, “ are the expressions of the tyrant, which came from him not a full year after those edicts he had published against the Christians

and caused to be engraved on plates of brass, and fixed upon the pillars. And now he, who but a little before looked upon us as impious, atheistical persons, and the very pest of mankind; insomuch that we were not permitted to dwell in any city, country part, or even in the deserts; this very same emperor enacted and promulgated these laws and edicts in favour of the Christians.”\*

Thus it was that Christianity had triumphed, and achieved its own emancipation by the invincible patience of the martyrs, aided and vindicated by so many signal interpositions of the Divine power and approbation. The cross was already the symbol of victory before it was assumed by Constantine. Proof sufficient had been already afforded that the church stood in need of no earthly patronage. It was proved that it could stand without the empire; these solemn edicts of emancipation, wrung from its most powerful and deadly enemies, as the finale of all the edicts and efforts of three centuries to crush and annihilate it, were proclamations to the whole world, and to all generations, that in despite of the empire, with all its terrors and its might, that church could subsist and flourish; and that even “the gates of hell could not prevail against it.” Instead of the church being in-

\* Various cities, amongst which Antioch led the way, having memorialized this same emperor, Maximin, for permission and authority to exterminate, and drive out from their entire precincts and boundaries, “the most pestilent and wicked sect of the Christians,” they received a most gracious answer, in which, among sundry other effusions of the imperial benignity, we read the following:—“And if any shall persist in that their EXECRABLE VANITY AND ERROR, let them be banished and driven far from your city and its vicinage, (according to your memorial,) that by this means your city, being freed from all pollution and impurity, may wholly devote itself to the sacrifices and worship of the immortal gods; and, that you may be sensible how agreeable to us was your address, we permit you to ask the greatest favour you have a mind to, and you shall obtain it; for it shall be cheerfully granted you, without any delay: AND THIS GREAT BOON GRANTED TO YOUR CITY SHALL ENDURE THROUGHOUT ALL AGES.” The above quoted edict shows that this sempiternal boon did not last twelve months.—See Gibbon, ch. xvi. vol. ii. p. 253.



debted to the empire, it was the empire that was indebted to the church. It is Gibbon who supplies one of the most cogent proofs of this position ; for in his malicious attempt to disparage the motives of Constantine's conversion, his chief argument is this ;—that a statesman-like view of the condition of the empire, and of his own position in it, must have dictated to Constantine *the sound policy of embracing the faith of Christ.\**

\* See Hist. of Decl. and Fall, &c. ch. xx. vol. ii. p. 438 :—  
“ But the councils of princes are more frequently influenced by views of temporal advantage, than by considerations of abstract and speculative truth,” &c. &c.

## CHAPTER XI.

“Attende gloriam crucis ipsius. Jam in fronte regum crux illa fixa est, cui inimici insultaverunt. Effectus probavit virtutem : domuit orbem non ferro sed ligno.”—*St. August. in Psal. xxxiv.*

BUT as to Rome, for several days after the triumph of Constantine nothing was thought of there but festivity and rejoicing ; and from all quarters of Italy, immense crowds came pouring in, not so much for sake of the games and spectacles that were given, as to ascertain, with their own eyes, whether the incredible rumours that had been spread abroad concerning the cross, were true. On beholding the trophy, and reading the inscriptions, at first, they could not believe their eyes ; the next moment, they were seized with astonishment and admiration ; and vast numbers of all degrees, sexes, and ages, upon the spot, declared themselves converted.

The lowly tombs of the apostles, the catacombs, the places where the martyrs had been tortured, or where their blood had been poured out like water, their members scattered to dogs and beasts of prey ; in short, whatever bore the slightest relationship to Christianity, became on a sudden the objects of the most enthusiastic interest. Even the most bigoted gave way to emotions of wonder and gratitude in the general fervour of excitement. They were not a little astonished at these things, wondering at so great and unexpected an alteration of affairs ; and crying out that the God of the Christians was the great and only God. They thronged around the champions of Christ wherever they appeared, and gazed upon them as beings more than human ; insomuch, that they, who before breathed nothing but threats and ven-

geance against the Christians, now hailed them with plaudits and cheers of welcome, as they issued from the innumerable crypts and tombs around the city, seeming almost to realize, and display beforehand to the unbelievers, and even in this life, the joys and glories of the resurrection. Moreover, those who had been banished, or who had abandoned all and taken to the forest and the caves of the mountains for the sake of Christ, or who had been long buried in the mines, were now beheld returning to their own habitations, and being glad and overflowing with delight, they came along, in companies, lauding the Almighty with hymns and psalms, not only through villages and country places, but along the great highways, and even through the streets and forums of the city. And you might have seen those who had been but lately in bonds, groaning under most severe punishments, and driven from house and home, now reinstated with joyful and pleasant countenances, and with many and signal honours, in their own dwellings, being held in high repute and veneration by their former enemies.\*

To the successors of St. Peter, (for whom during so many centuries there was no security or respite from imperial vengeance, even in the catacombs and sepulchres of the dead,) that stately palace, which had been appropriated to their own use by the emperors from the attainder and execution of Plautius Lateranus, was now granted in perpetuity by Constantine, with rich demesnes in Italy and the other provinces.†

\* See Euseb. Eccl. Hist. book ix. ch. 1.

† How this palace became forfeit has been already noticed. See also Juvenal, lib. iv. sat. 10. The fact of its having been transferred to Pope Melchiades by Constantine is borne out, not by the spurious decretals of Isidor Mercator, but by an uninterrupted series of witnesses of the most undoubted integrity, who attest, that the Lateran became, from that time, the chief seat and dwelling-place of the popes. Thus, in speaking of the council concerning the Donatists, held the year following (313), St. Optatus of Milevi says it was held in the Lateran. (Lib. i. contr. Parm.) St. Jerome, Ep. xxx. says of Fabiola: "Totâ urbe spectante Romanâ, ante



The power and solicitude so long exerted to deprive the martyrs even of an obscure grave were now busied in adorning the scenes of their sufferings, and in erecting magnificent and costly mausoleums above their sepulchres, outside the city walls.

From the night after the prince of the apostles had suffered martyrdom, the crypt hard by the circus of Nero, where his dead body had reposed, became a most hallowed spot, and a place of prayer and pilgrimage for the Christians. It formed one of the greatest privileges of his successors, to be laid, in death, beside the great founder and first viceroy of Christ's kingdom. A little oratory or tomb had been erected there, so early as the year 106, by one of his own faithful priests, who afterwards succeeded him in the pontificate. It had shared the fate of all the places consecrated to Christian worship; or rather, it was the mark of the persecutors' destructive fury, in the very first instance, and was still a heap of ruins, when, on a certain day, the legions, the senate, and the Roman people being there assembled, the emperor came to the scene where his predecessor had so inhumanly tormented and massacred the Christians, and St. Peter most cruelly of all. There having dismounted from his chariot, and laid aside his diadem, he prostrated himself before the confession of the apostle, and poured out floods of tears, so that they streamed down over the ornaments of his imperial robes. Then taking a spade, he dug with his own hands the first traces of the foundation of the Basilica of St. Peter, and carried away from the foundations on his shoulders a basket of earth in honour of the apostles.

The dimensions of the temple erected, at that time, were these:—The nave, from the great entrance to the chancel, beyond which stood the altar, measured 390 palms, and from beyond the altar to the absis,

*diem Paschæ in basilicâ quondam Laterani, qui Cæsariano truncatus est gladio, staret in ordine pœnitentium.*" And Prudentius, *adv. Symmach.* says: "*Cætibus qui magnas Laterani currit ad ædes.*"

or semi-circular termination, where stood the pontiff's chair, 36 palms ; the tribune was 44 palms, making 430 palms the entire length, not including the width of the transept, which was 406 palms long. The nave was in height 170 palms ; and the distance between the two massive pillars, from which sprung the arch connecting it with the transept, was 78 palms ; but between the colonnades on either side, that is to say, the width of the nave, measured 106 palms. On each side of this nave were two aisles, making four aisles in all, besides the centre one, or the nave itself. The two interior aisles or those next the nave, were each 38 palms wide, and 82 in height ; each of the exterior aisles was 62 palms high and 39 palms wide ; and the colonnades of the Corinthian order, that separated the nave from the aisles, and the aisles from each other, consisted each of 22 pillars ; those next the nave being 40 palms high, those between the aisles only 26.\*

In front of the Basilica, was an atrium of quadrangular shape surrounded by four porticos ; that one next the Basilica, consisting of 46 columns, was long as the Basilica was wide, that is, it was 285 palms in length, in width 50 palms, and in height 59 ; serving as a vestibule to the Basilica, into which you entered by three lofty portals ; one on the right, one on the left, and one in the centre, which last-mentioned portal was the greatest of the three. But as to the two lateral porticos of the rectangular atrium, each of them was 250 palms long and 40 broad ; the fourth side, in the centre of which were the great gates of ingress to the atrium or court, was equal, of course, in length to the corresponding side, forming the vestibule of the temple ; but it was only 40 palms wide and 55 palms in height. In the very middle of this atrium, there was a great fountain embellished with symbolical ornaments, such as the *Agnus Dei*, the

\* For the authorities, and for description of the Constantine Basilica, consult Erasmo Pistolesi, *Il Vaticano Descr. ed Illustr.* vol. i. p. 39, 40.

cross, the palm branch, winged beings, and flowers in marble and in mosaic. The tazza, or basin, of this fountain was surrounded by a colonnade of porphyry : out of its centre there seemed to grow a stately pine of bronze, which had formerly served as if to shade Cybele, the mother of all the gods, in a recess of the Pantheon ; and, under the umbrage of its spreading arms, the limpid waters poured out by gilded dolphins served to cool and refresh the Christian pilgrim, reminding him, withal, of the purity and calmness of spirit required in the worshippers of Him before whom " nothing that is impure can enter."\*

From this fountain smaller ones, placed all round the atrium in the porticos for the purification of those who entered the temple, were supplied perennially ; and besides the great fountain for the pilgrims, there was another, called by the people Sabatina, nearer to the seventy-five steps of marble, each two hundred palms long, by which you ascended to the platform before the vestibule, which platform, also of marble, was two hundred palms by seventy-six in depth, towards the vestibule of the basilica. This vestibule itself was covered with gilded tiles, and the facade, or front elevation of the Basilica, rising above it had the apex of its pediment surmounted by a cross, from which golden rays as it were of glory darted out on every side ; and under the architrave, and between the windows—of which there were two tiers of an arched shape—all the spaces were decorated with figures and groups in fresco ; representing the apostles in various attitudes of adoration, our Lord being depicted on high, with St. Paul on his left hand, with the sword of the word of God, and on his right

\* St. Paulinus, who saw this atrium, or piazza, while one may say it was still new, speaks of it as follows : " Vel quâ sub eadem mole tectorum geminis utrinque porticibus latera diffundit : quâve protento nitens atrio, fusa vestibulo est, ubi cantharum ministra manibus et oribus nostris fluentem ructantem fastigiatus solido ære tholus ornatus inumbrat, non sine mystica specie."—*Ad Alethium, Ep. xxxi.*



hand, St. Peter with the keys of the kingdom of heaven.\*

The rapidity with which this sacred edifice sprung up from among the ruins of the Neronian circus and the temple of Apollo, of which it was almost entirely constructed, is scarcely credible; for the genius of Constantine, as impetuous and impatient of delay, as it was brilliant and decisive, could not brook the ordinary routine of art; but in his architectural enterprises, as in his campaigns, bringing the immense resources at his command to bear upon the point of interest, caused not only temples, but cities to rise as if by magic. Hence there was about the basilicas to the honour of the apostles and martyrs of his erection, all the air of trophies thrown upon a field of battle suddenly, and under the impulse of an enthusiasm, too tumultuous to be heedful of precision, and only eager to signalize and commemorate the triumph. They were on this account the more appropriate; and what they wanted in artistic correctness and elaboration of detail, was eclipsed in one universal blaze of splendour: forgotten in delight and wonder at the gorgeous effect produced by the brilliant colouring, and barbaric gold, with which every object shone resplendent, from the mosaic pavements, to the capitals and burnished ceilings.†

Objects of the most divine and touching import

\* See "Il Vat. Descr. ed Illustr. da Erasm. Pistolesi," ubi supra. The great fountain described above was either added altogether, or newly ornamented by Pope Symmachus, about the year 500, according to an ancient MS. cited by Pistolesi. The pine, which stands at present in the Vatican garden of the Belvedere, is thus alluded to by Dante, in describing a giant:

"La faccia sua, mi pareva lunga e grossa

Come la pina di san Pietro a Roma."—*Canto xxxi. del Infer.*

† That such was its effect on St. Paulinus, who beheld it not very many years after its erection, we may conjecture from what he says in his letter to Alethius:—"Quanto ipsum apostolum attolebas gaudio, cum totam ejus basilicam densis inopum cætibus stiparisses, vel qua sub alto sui culminis mediis ampla laquearibus longum patet, et Apostolico eminens solio coruscans ingredientium lumina stringit, et corda lætificat."—Ep. xxxi.

saluted the gaze to whatever side it turned. The scene of the nativity, with the Virgin Mother, the Divine Infant reposing on her bosom, and the angelic choirs proclaiming, in hymns of celestial melody, "the peace of good will to men." On another side, the baptism in the Jordan; the eucharistic supper; then the Saviour restoring sight to the blind, curing the paralytic, calling Lazarus from the tomb, or feeding the five thousand in the wilderness; the multitude seated around upon the grass, with every minute detail of the gospel narrative depicted to the life. In another part, the transfiguration on Mount Tabor, the crucifixion of Christ, his burial, his resurrection, his ascension into heaven, the descent of the Holy Ghost, in tongues of fire, on the day of Pentecost.

But what most of all arrested the eyes, and caused them to overflow with tears—welling up from a contrite heart—were the stages of the Saviour's passion; for with such vividness and pathos had the painter represented the "man of sorrows," from his bitter agony in the garden until his expiring upon the cross, that the most obdurate beholder could not but be moved to sympathy and repentance.

But though all parts of the temple shone with resplendent beauty, it was the sanctuary attracted the eye in a pre-eminent degree, by its admirable light, and by the sacred emblems and decorations of gold, and silver, and precious stones that glittered round the altar, and on everything connected with the Divine mysteries.

The emperor caused a shrine for the relics of St. Peter, to be fabricated of Cyprian bronze. This was overshadowed by a baldachino, or canopy, of silver, supported by pillars, some of porphyry, others of a costly marble, called tresthynian by the Greeks. The cross, placed on the sarcophagus or shrine which served for the great altar, was of the purest gold, and of one hundred and fifty pounds weight. At foot this cross bore an inscription, in little characters of a brilliant jet black, stating that Constantine Augustus and the empress Ellen his mother had

caused that Basilica to be made refulgent, and embellished with regal splendour; and the absis, or tribune, where the apostolic throne was placed, being entirely burnished with crimson and gold, most strictly verified the inscription. The four candelabra, two on each side of the altar, were of bronze, ornamented with medallions, and relievi, in silver, representing the Acts of the apostles. Each candelabrum weighed three hundred pounds, and rested upon ten claws. They made an offering to the altar of three golden chalices, each weighing ten pounds, and set with fifty emeralds each, with two silver vases, (for the wine of sacrifice,) each of two hundred pounds weight; twenty chalices of silver, each of ten pounds weight, besides other sacred vessels and patenas—some of silver, others of the purest massive gold; one in particular being adorned with emeralds, and various precious stones, to the number of two hundred and fifteen. The golden lamp, which they hung before the shrine, weighed thirty-five pounds, and had fifty lights, each light issuing, as it were, from a dolphin's mouth. The lustre, or pharos, of the chancel was of the same form, but of silver; and to the right and left of the basilica were sixty other silver lamps, each with its dolphin lights, but of only eight pounds weight. The censor, or thurible, weighed fifteen pounds, and was all over gold and diamonds. In the altar itself was nothing but silver and gold to the weight of three hundred and fifty pounds, inlaid and thickly studded with precious pearls and emeralds.

And the gifts of the emperor and empress-mother to St. Peter for the support of the Divine worship in his Basilica, were as follow—

Through the dioceses of the East :

In the city of Antioch, the house of Datianus, bringing in 240*l.* per annum;\* a small yearly property in Nicea, of something better than 20*l.*; in Cerethea, a bath, annual rent 42*l.*; a bakery in the same place,

\* The original says: "Solidos ducentos quadraginta." The sum assigned in the text as equivalent to this is very open to objection, as it is not easy to determine the exact value of the Solidi.



rent 23*l.*; taverns in the same place, 10*l.*; the garden of Maro, 10*l.*; and another garden worth 11*l.* per annum, both in the same city. In the city of Antioch, the lands of the Sibyl, bringing 222*l.* in money; 150 reams of paper; of aroma or spice, 200 pounds; and thirty-five pounds of balsam.

The estate of Eatinus Caducus, worth 50*l.* in specie, and 70 reams of paper.

In the environs of Alexandria, the estate of Timealca, recently presented to Constantine Augustus by Ambronius, worth a rental of 620*l.* in coin; reams of paper, 300; 300 pounds of the oil of nard; of balsam, 60; of aroma, 150 pounds; and 50 pounds of Isaurian storax.

The estate of Eatinus, &c. In other parts of Egypt, the estate of Agapius recently presented to Constantine Augustus: the Cynopolitan estate, rental 800*l.* in coin; of paper, 400 reams; 50 medimni of pepper; of saffron, 100 pounds; of storax, 150; of cinnamon, or sweet spice of Casia, 200; of nard oil, 300; of balsam, 100 pounds; of linen, 100 bales; of Cyprian oil, 100 pounds, and of fine papyrus, 1000 yards: another estate of 450*l.* in coin; 200 reams of paper; of spice of Casia, 50 pounds, and of balsam other 50; besides the estate of Armanazon, near the city of Cyprus, in the province of the Euphrates, worth 380*l.* per annum; and near Tarsus of Cilicia, a small island.\*

But if in the dedication of "the second temple," the old men wept, recollecting the glory of the first temple, which had been dedicated by King Solomon with so much magnificence, what must have been the emotions with which the Christians who had been accustomed to adore the holy eucharistic sacrifice in crypts and cemeteries, and under the ban of infamy and death, when they now beheld the solemn dedica-

\* Ex libello de munif. Const. a Biblioth. edit. ex Archiv. S. R. E. apud Baron. ann. 324. No. 63—65. In the same place, see the fac-simile of the inscription found stamped on the bricks when a portion of the Basilica was taken down in Baronius's own times; CONSTANTINVS AVG. D. N. was on each brick or tile.

tion of, and the tremendous mysteries offered up, in this heaven upon earth, so full of dazzling beauty and golden glory? They seemed to have before their eyes what was foreshown in vision to St. John, when he saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending from heaven, new, from God, adorned like a bride. The venerable pontiff and high priest according to the order of Melchizedek enthroned, with his mitred college of bishops and presbyters seated on either hand: the multitude of acolytes, according to the various orders and gradation of their ministry: above all, the golden altar, on which faith beheld "the Lamb as it were slain," and fragrant clouds of incense rising before the altar, like the prayers of saints; all this seemed to be sketched and copied from what was revealed to St. John, as the tabernacle was copied from the model shown to Moses on the mount; and they exclaimed, as if by a divine impulse of the Holy Spirit, "Behold the tabernacle of God with men!"\* The sackcloth of mourning was now exchanged for the vestments of gladness and joy: the tribulation and disconsolate gloom of the Passion gave place to the hallelujahs, the Divine light, and beatitude of the Resurrection.

From Rome this joyous light diffused itself over the universal church; to Africa, Britain, and all those nations which are bounded with the Western ocean,† in the first instance, and ere long to Pontus, Egypt, and the remotest boundaries of the earth.

"All mankind was now free from the slavery and oppression of tyrants," says Eusebius; "and being released from their former miseries, it was acknowledged by all, even by the heathens (according to their own way, and as well as they could,) that the only true God was alone the defender of the pious; but amongst us Christians there was an inexpressible joy, and kind of celestial gladness, when we saw all places which, through the impiety of the persecutors, had

\* Apoc. ch. iv. v. vi. viii.

† See Euseb. Life of Const. book i. ch. 41.

been a little while before reduced to utter ruin, as it were, suddenly restored to life, raised up from their long prostrate condition ; and temples again springing aloft from the ground to a vast height, and in splendour far exceeding those which had been formerly destroyed. Then appeared a spectacle long earnestly sighed for, and much desired by us all ; to wit, the festive solemnities of the dedication of churches throughout every city, and the consecrations of the new-built oratories ; the frequent synods and assemblies of bishops, the concourse of strangers from countries far remote, the mutual love and benevolence of the people ; the union of the members of Christ's body joined together in an entire harmony and concord ; all the members of the mystic body being vivified and knit together by the all-pervading virtue of the Holy Ghost ; one soul in all ; the same alacrity of faith ; one common unison of all in hymning the Divine praises ; while nothing could be more exact, full of decorum and majesty, than the celebration of all the various functions and holy ceremonies of worship by the various orders of the hierarchy."\*

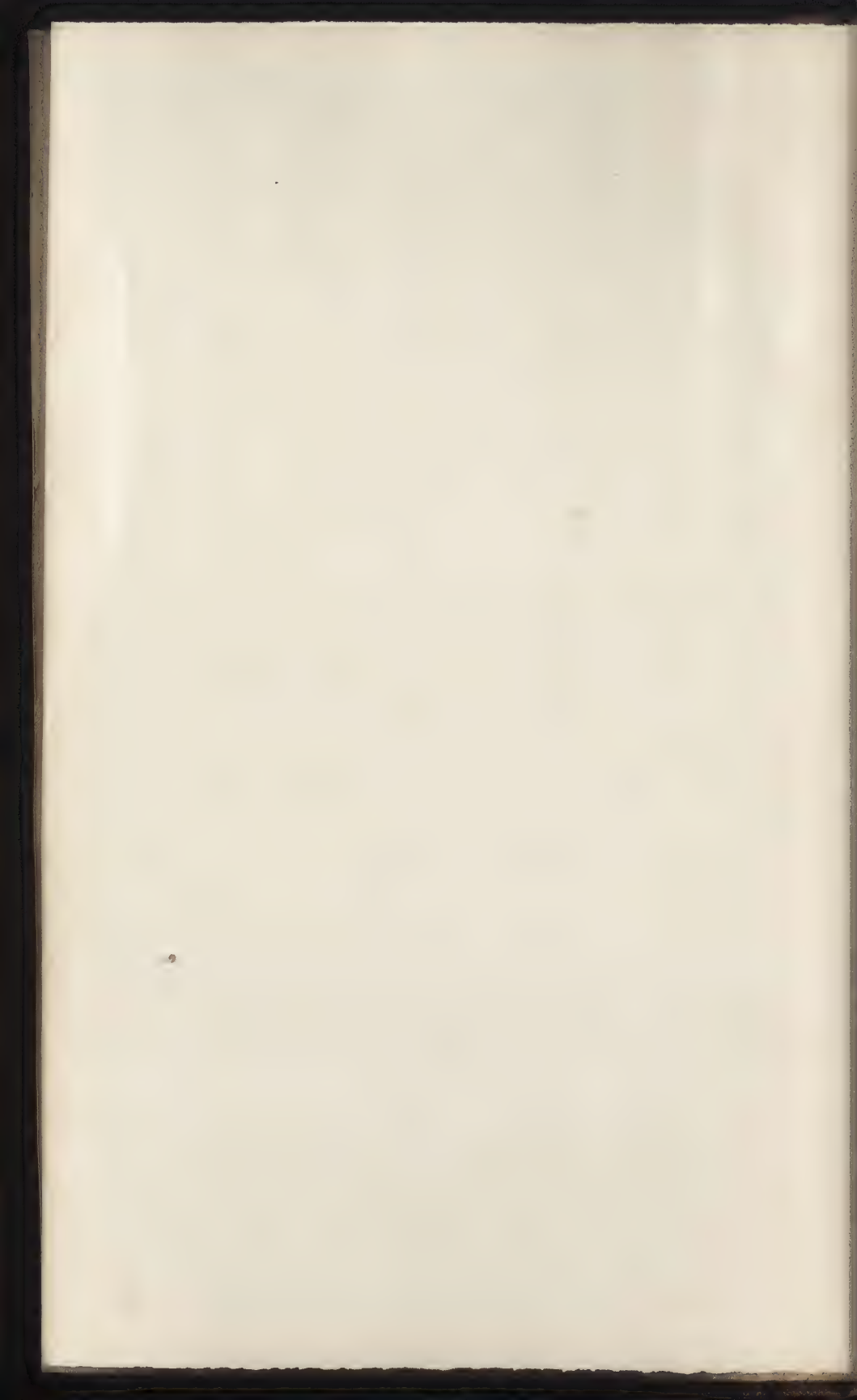
Even in the outlying countries, inhabited by nations not only independent of, but breathing hostility to the civil power of Rome, the genial influence of the Divine light made itself felt. It was hailed with enthusiasm by the Goths and the Germans.

"Its rays," says Gibbon, "illuminated the coast of India,—were diffused over Arabia, Ethiopia, and even penetrated the sequestered regions of Abyssinia ;" so that the empire of the Popes was extended far beyond the frontiers which bounded the empire of the Cæsars ; and "Rome, constituted the capital of the world by the chair of Peter," had already extended her conquests, by the gospel, much more widely than she had been ever able to extend them by her armies.†

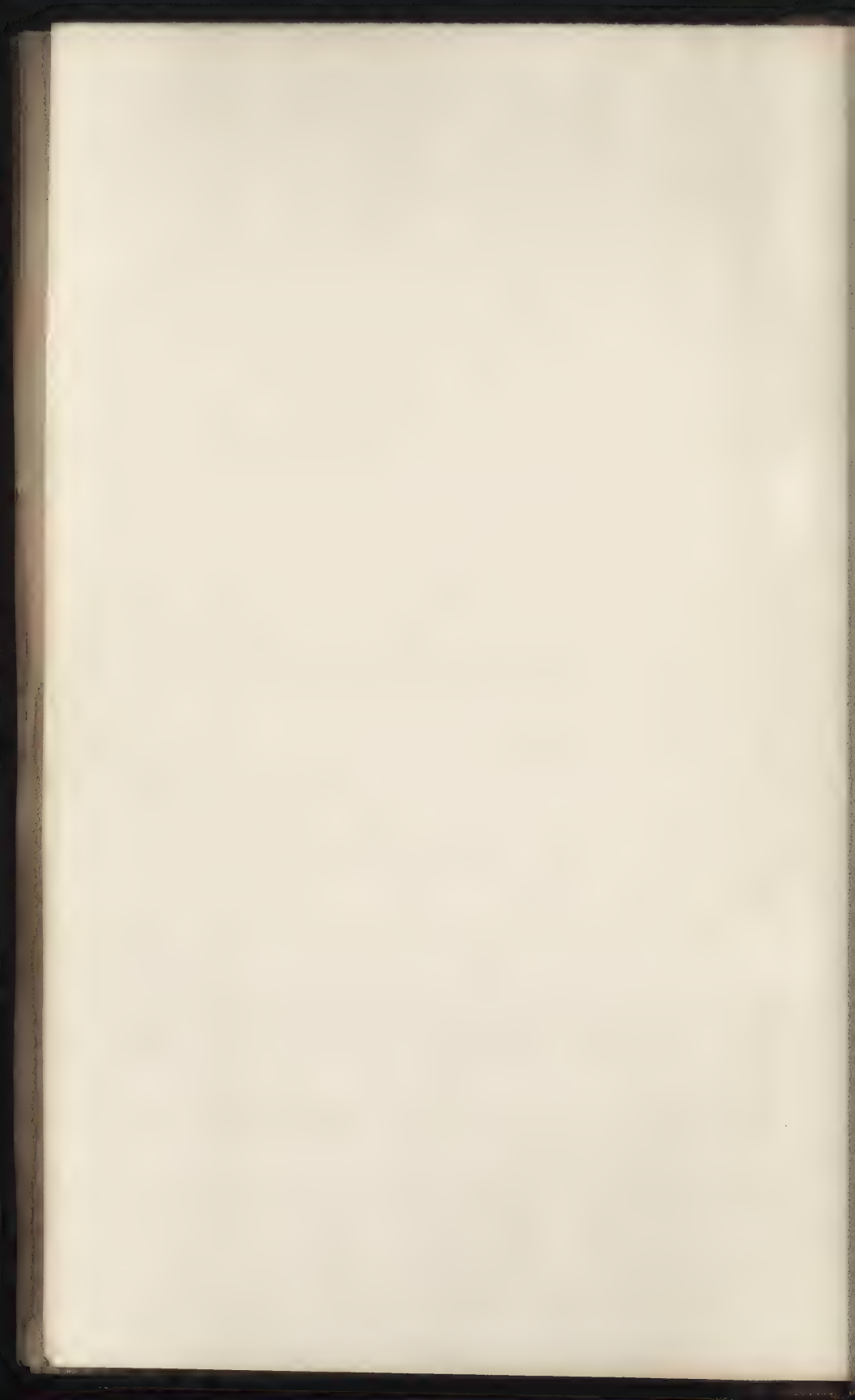
\* Eccl. book x. ch. 2, 3.

† S. Leo. Magn. ; see also Gibbon, ch. xx. ; Rufinus, l. i. ; and Theod. l. i. ch. 24.





BOOK V.





## CHAPTER I.

“ Comme les paiens étaient encore (A.D. 322) les plus forts, surtout à Rome, et dans l'Italie, ils contraignaient les Crétiens à prendre aux sacrifices et aux cérémonies qui se faisaient pour la prospérité publique, sous prétexte que tout citoyen doit s'intéresser au bonheur de l'état.”—*Lebeau, l'Hist. de Bas. Emp.* l. iii. 35.

IT is well nigh a century since the triumph of the Labarum, and still Rome wears the aspect of a pagan city. One hundred and fifty-two temples, and one hundred and eighty smaller shrines or chapels are still sacred to the heathen gods, and used for their public worship. Above all still towers the Capitol, with its fifty temples, bearing the titles of the *dii majores* and of the deities and heroes tutelary of Rome, and of the empire—the temples of Jove, of Juno, and Minerva; of Mars, Janus, and Romulus; of Cæsar, and of Victory.

Nor was it alone the ancient legalized religion of Numa that was still upheld: Rome had become the rallying point—a city of refuge for every thing that was pagan in the whole empire: there was no form of superstition that had fallen into contempt or been banished from other quarters, that did not flourish there, and celebrate its rites with publicity. The prefect of the city, who wielded a sovereign authority in the absence of the emperors, was invariably a pagan. The nobility, with very few exceptions, were devoted to paganism to the last; and, for the rabble, who passed their lives in a round of brutal excitement and debauchery, its licentious and sanguinary festivals and shows had lost nothing of their fascination.

Fifteen pontiffs exercised their supreme jurisdic-

tion of all things consecrated to the service of the gods.\* Fifteen augurs observed the face of the heavens, and took the omens by which the state was to be governed, from the flight of birds. Fifteen sages guarded the Sibylline books, and in junctures of public peril and perplexity gave utterance to the oracles which they contained. Six vestals devoted their virginity to foster the sacred fire of Vesta, and to keep eternal watch over the palladium and other mystic symbols—the pledges given to Rome by destiny, which it was fatal for any other mortal to behold. Seven epulos prepared the banquet given annually to the deities of Olympus—ordered the procession and the ceremonies of the festival. Three flamens were regarded with superlative veneration as the ministers of Jupiter, of Mars, and of Romulus, the gods who, in a special manner, watched over the fate of Rome and of the universe. The king of the sacrifices still represented the person of Numa and his successors, and as a portion of the ceremony, was put to flight like Tarquin. The Salians and the Lupercals still practised, with undiminished fervour, their solemnities of buffoonery and lewdness. If the establishment of monarchy by Augustus, and the removal of the seat of empire by Constantine, had in a great degree impaired the civil authority enjoyed by the pagan hierarchy in the councils of the old republic, their jurisdiction, especially within the prefecture of Rome, extending one hundred miles on every side from the city as a centre, was still considerable, while the importance of their offices and dignity were in every other respect increased. Their gorgeous laticlaves of the Tyrian die, their chariots of state, and sumptuous entertainments, attracted the admiration of the multitude; this splendour, as well as the support of the old established worship, was amply provided for from the consecrated lands; and the fifteen pontiffs were entitled to the highest rank as the companions of the emperors.

\* Gibbon, vol. iii. p. 405.

In short, it would be quite erroneous to imagine that Christianity was made the religion of the state by Constantine.\* The edict of Milan granted liberty of conscience to all sects, amongst whom it ranked the Christians: conceding also to the latter the restitution of their churches, and of the ecclesiastical property of which they had been stripped during the recent persecution. "Having long since perceived," says the edict, "that a liberty of religion ought not to be denied, but that license should be permitted to every one's will and arbitrement of being careful about their religious performances according to their own mind and judgment:—We have decreed, that as well all other persons as those that are Christians should retain the faith and observance of their own sect and religion. We have also further decreed in favour of the Christians, that those of their places wherein they used to convene in times past be immediately and without any hesitancy restored to the said Christians, without money or exaction; but if those who purchased or had grants of these places have a desire to demand compensation, let them make their address to the governor that presides as judge in that province: and inasmuch as the said Christians are known to have had possession, not only of those places wherein they usually assembled, but of others also which did not particularly and apart belong to any private persons, but to certain societies or congregations of them, you (the governors to whom the edict is directed) shall give order that they be in like manner restored to the said Christians, according to the claims of the several congregations."† It is true, that various favours and privileges were subsequently conferred upon his co-religionists by the imperial convert: the practices of magic were forbidden in private houses, and, according to a document very ancient, although of dubious authenticity, the

\* A.D. 312.

† See Euseb. Eccl. Hist. book x. ch. 5. This edict was issued jointly by Constantine and Licinius.



prince was only dissuaded by the earnest entreaties of St. Sylvester, from resorting to severity with the pagans who were unmoved by his arguments ; but it is certain, notwithstanding, that long after the dynasty of Constantine had disappeared, the religion of Numa continued to be regarded as that of the constitution ; while Christianity was regarded only as a sect.

So far indeed, were the Christians from being in the ascendant, that we find a rescript dated from Sirmium, on the 8th of the kalends of June, 322, that is, ten years after Constantine's conversion, from which it appears that the Christians were again exposed to violence in Rome and throughout Italy, under the pretence that it was incumbent on every individual claiming the protection of the state, to join in the great social acts of religion which it prescribed.\* It was during this new outbreak of the old persecuting spirit, chiefly directed against the clergy, that St. Sylvester, the then pope, was compelled to take shelter in a cave on Mount Soracte. This flight of the venerable pontiff is rendered intelligible by the fact, that the enmity heretofore levelled against our Lord himself, began to be, from this period, directed against St. Peter, as the prime agent in propagating and maintaining the Christian superstition, as they called it. "When they saw," says St. Augustin, "that Christianity had not been extirpated, but, on the contrary, multiplied without measure, by so many and such grievous persecutions, they forged a pretended response of some oracle in Greek verses, in which Christ is indeed acquitted of this sacrilege, but St. Peter convicted of having, by magical incantations, contrived to secure that the name of his Master should be worshipped for three hundred and sixty-

\* "Quoniam comperimus quosdam ecclesiasticos et cæteros catholicæ *sectæ* servientes, e diversarum religionem hominibus ut lustrarum sacrificia celebranda compelli, hac sancione sancimus, &c. Dat. 8 kal. Jun. Sirmii, Severo et Rufino, coss."—Apud Bar. ann. 322. No. 1.

five years ; but that, at the expiration of that period, there was to be an end of it." \*

When, two years later, that is, in the year 324, and after he had reduced the entire empire under his own dominion, Constantine visited the eternal city, he found the senate still unshaken in its attachment to the ancient superstitions. He is said to have exerted himself with the zeal of an apostle for their conversion. In a grand assembly of the senate, convened in the Forum of Trajan, he harangued them with great eloquence and force of argument on the absurdity and wickedness of idolatry : but though the imperial orator was cheered and applauded to the echo, and escorted to the palace by the entire assembly with lighted torches, he soon discovered that little reliance was to be placed upon these very flattering exhibitions ; for no sooner did he refuse to conform to the immemorial custom of ascending the Capitol with the troops, there to offer sacrifice and perform other rites prescribed by law, than he incurred the hatred both of the senate and the people. It is the pagan historian Zosimus who mentions this circumstance, and he adds, that it was from not being able to endure the public insults and execrations to which he was exposed on account of his contempt of paganism that Constantine was, as it were, driven out of Rome to found a new capital, where he might follow his newly adopted religion unmolested.†

Thenceforward the ancient queen of empire became more endeared and venerable than ever in the eyes of the pagans, who, besides being the majority, monopolised the senate and the schools, and by their superior rank and opulence, secured the chief posts of influence in the armies and the civil service, for which long

\* St. Aug. de Civit. Dei. l. viii. c. 25.

† "Cum autem dies quidam, more patrio, festus appetisset, quo die in capitolium exercitui ascendendum erat, eum ascensum verbis contumeliosis impudenter insectans, re divina proculcata, senatus atque populi odium incurrit, cumque profectas ab omnibus, prope dixerim, execrationes haud ferret, urbem quamdam Romæ parem quærebat, in quâ palatium ipse sibi conderet," &c.—Zos. l. ii.

practice and experience of affairs had made them better qualified than the Christians.

The Catholics of rank and fortune were naturally attracted to the new capital, where, instead of being treated as apostates, and effectually excluded by conscientious scruples, as well as by party prejudice, from most of the high posts in public life, they were loaded with favours, and sure of preferment. Nor were the votaries of the old established worship at all likely to be mollified in their bigotry, by seeing the ancient queen of empire denuded of her great prerogative by the Christian Cæsars, or by finding those whom they had so long and cruelly oppressed and persecuted, raised up from their inferiority, to the same constitutional level with themselves. The nature of their feelings towards their newly constituted fellow-citizens, became manifest when the accession of Julian afforded them an opportunity to display them.

The churches and dwellings of the Christians, says Gibbon, were wrecked, at the first signal; the sepulchres of the martyrs desecrated, and their sacred ashes given to the winds. The Christians themselves were seized, and, as of old, tormented and put to death, and their lifeless bodies dragged through the streets, exposed to the most cruel and disgusting indignities. But it was against priests, and bishops, and the virgins who had consecrated themselves to their Redeemer, that they raged with the most frantic inhumanity. Their very entrails were torn out, and, after being tasted by these hideous fanatics, were flung to the swine and dogs that infested the purlieus of the cities.

All the high and emolumentary offices of the empire had been filled with zealots for paganism by Julian, who made hostility to the Galileans a *sine qua non* for promotion. A reaction ensued upon the overthrow and death of the apostate, and the re-establishment of Christianity upon the throne. "But from that period," says Sismondi, "up to the fall of the empire, a hostile sect, which regarded itself unjustly stripped of its ancient honours, invoked the vengeance of the gods



on the heads of the government, exulted in the public calamities, and probably hastened them by its intrigues, though inextricably involved in the common ruin."\*

This party had its head quarters in Rome. That city, since the final retirement of the emperors, had, in a great degree, resumed its independence, under the pagan prefects, and the senate becoming every day more republican in views. Scarcely any alteration in its religious aspect took place on the death of Julian; the temples continued open, and altars smoked with sacrifice to a thousand idols, in every direction. The patrician nobles still continued to prize, above every other honour, their exclusive privilege to fill the various hierarchical colleges. These dignities exalted them to the same level with the emperors, and, so thoroughly was the idea of supremacy in the state identified with the pagan profession, that they did not recognise the authority of the Christian Cæsars to be legitimate, until they had first received the stole and title of supreme pontiff, thus conforming, at least politically, to the religion of the constitution, by becoming nominally its head.†

The darling project of reinstating idolatry in the throne of persecution was never relinquished. Every ambitious usurper was sure of the sympathy and support of the Roman senate, by holding forth this promise. The pontiffs who waited on Gratian, in order to invest and ordain him as the head of their college, did not hesitate to declare that, if he declined this prescription of immemorial custom, they would speedily

\* Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. i. chap. v. p. 96. Cab. Cycl. No. 56.

† "Simul enim atque summum imperium quisque accipiebat amictus ei sacerdotalis a pontificibus offerebatur et continuo pontificis maximi titulum usurpabat, cum ergo pontifices ex more Gratiano talem amictum attulissent, aversatus est id quod petebant; ratus non esse fas illiusmodi habitu Christianum uti. Cumque sacerdotibus stola reddita fuisset: aiunt eum, qui dignitate princeps inter eos erat, dixisse; *si princeps non vult appellare pontifex, ad modum brevi pontifex Maximus fiat.*"—Zosim.

transfer their allegiance to another pontifex maximus; thus playing on the name of the tyrant, Maximus, who was at that time preparing to usurp the empire of the west. Their hopes were particularly sanguine when Eugenius the rhetorician was invested with the purple after the assassination of the lawful emperor. This happened in 392. Throughout Italy the temples were re-opened; the smoke of incense ascended from all quarters; the entrails of victims were explored for the signs of victory. The effigies of the heathen gods were substituted for the cross and the monogram of Christ upon the standards of the legions. St. Ambrose was obliged to fly from Milan; for the soldiery boasted they would stable their horses in the churches, and force the ministers of the altar to serve the camp.

In effect, it appears from all history, that the senate, the highest court and order of the empire, and that body which had most uniformly urged the persecution of the church, had in nowise given up its attachment to paganism. The memorials presented by Symmachus, prefect of the city, to the emperors Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius, make it quite evident; since it was in the name of the senate he demanded of those emperors the restoration of what had been retrenched from the endowments of the pagan hierarchy, and that the altar of victory should be restored. "Grant me but the liberty of living according to my ancient usages," the city is made to say in this apology; "or has it come to this, that I am to be rebuked, in my old age, for a religion that has subdued the world to my dominion: for those rites which repelled Hannibal from my walls, the Gauls from the Capitol? It is too late: it would be discreditable to turn convert in my decrepitude."

It is plain, from the refutation of this document by St. Ambrose, that it was not without reason Symmachus represented his memorial as embodying the wishes of the senate. This petition had been preceded by another to the same effect in the reign of Gratian; and all that the Christian minority could

effect on these occasions, was to absent themselves from proceedings, to which they were unable to offer any effectual opposition, or to make known their feelings in the shape of a protest.\* The worship of the Christ was regarded by the conscript fathers merely as the devotion of the prince; the worship of the ancient gods as that of the Roman empire.† Notwithstanding every prohibition, the immolation of animals continued to be practised with the greatest frequency and publicity. When St. Ambrose was in Rome, every place, he said, was infected with the fumes of impure sacrifices, and the idols were elevated on all sides as if to provoke the divine anger.‡

The state of feeling at a still later period (A.D. 404) may be conjectured from what happened on a memorable occasion in the greatest temple of Roman paganism, the Coliseum.

\* Vid. S. Ambrose, lib. v. Epist. xxx. et xxxi.

† Relat. Symmachi.—*Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* Epist. xxxi.



## CHAPTER II.

“ Arches on arches ! as it were that Rome,  
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,  
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,  
Her Coliseum stands.  
And here the buzz of eager nations ran,  
In murmur'd, or loud-roar'd applause,  
As man was slaughter'd by his fellow-man.”

*Childe Harold*, canto iv.

“ THE first Christian emperor,” says Gibbon, “ may claim the honour of the first edict which condemned the art and amusement of shedding human blood ; but this benevolent law expressed the wishes of the prince without reforming an inveterate abuse, (a most solemn and sacred portion, however, of pagan worship,) which degraded a civilised nation below the condition of savage cannibals.\* Several hundred, perhaps several thousand victims were annually slaughtered in the great cities of the empire ; and the month of December, more particularly devoted to the combats of gladiators, still exhibited to the eyes of the Roman people a grateful spectacle of blood and cruelty.”†

The shrine sacred to these rites of pagan religion was the Coliseum, so called from its gigantic dimensions.‡ It was a building of an elliptic figure, 564 feet in length, and 467 in breadth, founded on four-score arches, and rising, with four successive orders

\* “ Siccome io ho provato (Thes. nov. Inscr. pag. 1794), Costantino il Grande con una legge data in Berito aveva proibito per tutto l' impero Romano i guochi sanguinosi de gladiatori ; ma era sì radicato l' abuso, e n' erano sì incapricciati i popoli, che doppo la morte di quell' invito imperadore tornarono, malgrado de' suoi successori a praticarlo.”—*Muratori, Ann. d' Italia*, an. 404.

† Ch. xxx. vol. iv. p. 50.

‡ See Maffei, *Verona Illustr.* par. 4. lib. i. ch. 2.

of architecture, to the height of 140 feet. The outside of the edifice was incrustated with marble, and decorated with statues. The slopes of the vast concave, which formed the inside, were filled and surrounded with sixty or eighty rows of seats of marble, likewise covered with cushions, and capable of receiving with ease above fourscore thousand spectators. Sixty-four vomitories (for by that name the doors were very aptly distinguished) poured forth the immense multitudes; and the entrances, passages, and staircases, were contrived with such exquisite skill, that each person, whether of the senatorial, the equestrian, or plebeian order, arrived at his destined place without trouble or confusion.\*

The lowest row of seats next the arena, assigned to the senators and foreign ambassadors, was called the podium; there also, on an elevated platform, was the emperor's throne, shaded by a canopy, like a pavilion; the place of the manager, or editor, of the games, as he was called; and reserved seats for the vestal virgins.† The podium projected over the wall which surrounded the arena, and was raised between twelve and fifteen feet above it, secured with a breastwork or parapet of gold or gilt bronze, against the irruption of wild beasts. As a further defence, the arena was surrounded with an iron rail, and a canal. The equites, or second order of nobles, sat in fourteen rows behind the senators. The rest of the people sat behind, upon seats called *popularia*, rising tier above tier to a gallery, with a colonnade in front, running all round the amphitheatre, immediately under the *velarium*, or awning, and generally occupied by females, soldiers, and attendants. A certain number of prætorian guards were also posted at the *cunei* or sections, and contributed, by their glittering armour and martial air, to the effect and splendour of the scene. Nigh to the amphitheatre was a place called the *spoliarum*, to which the gladiators who were

\* Gibb. ch. xii. vol. i. p. 412.

† Suet. in vit. Aug. 44.

killed or mortally wounded were dragged by a hook.\*

Nothing was omitted which could be in any respect subservient to the convenience and pleasure of the spectators. They were protected from the sun and rain by an ample canopy, the *velarium*, occasionally drawn over their heads. The air was continually refreshed by the playing of fountains, and an infinity of small tubes dispersed a shower of the most delicious perfumes, which descended on the languishing spectators like aromatic dews. The arena, in the centre of which stood the idol of Jupiter, formed the stage, and derived its name from being usually strewed with the finest sand.

During the progress of the games, it assumed the most different forms in quick succession. At one moment it seemed to rise out of the earth, like the garden of the Hesperides, and was afterwards broken into the rocks and caverns of Thrace. The subterraneous pipes conveyed an inexhaustible supply of water; and what had just before appeared a level plain might be suddenly converted into a wide lake, covered with armed vessels, and replenished with the monsters of the deep. As to the decoration of the scenes, we read, on various occasions, that the whole furniture of the amphitheatre consisted either of silver, or of gold, or of amber.† An eye witness affirms that the nets designed as a defence against the wild beasts were of gold wire; that the porticos were gilded, and that the belt or circle that divided the various ranks of spectators from each other was studded with a precious mosaic of beautiful stones.‡

After the procession of the gods, (with which the games of the amphitheatre as well as those of the circus were commenced,) the gladiators who were doomed to fight were also led round the arena in pro-

\* "*Unco trahebantur.*"—Plin. Pan. 36; Lamp. Commod. fin.

† Gibb. ch. xii. vol. i. p. 414. Consult Plin. Hist. Nat. xxxiii. 16, xxxvii. 11.

‡ Calphur. vii.



cession. Then they were matched in pairs, and their swords examined by the manager. As a prelude to the battle, and to create the proper pitch of excitement, they fought first with wooden swords; then, upon a signal by sound of trumpet, they laid aside these and assumed the proper arms. They not only pushed with the point, but struck with the edge. A singularly vivid description of the excitement that prevailed among the spectators during the sanguinary struggle has been left us by St. Augustine in his *Confessions*.\*

"It happened," he says, "while his friend Alipius was studying the law at Rome, that he was met one day, by some of his fellow-students, as they were walking after dining, who insisted upon conducting him to the amphitheatre; for it was one of the baleful holidays when Rome took her pleasure in these spectacles of human slaughter. As Alipius had an extreme horror of this kind of cruelty, he at first resisted with all his might; but resorting to that sort of violence which is sometimes permitted among friends, they dragged him along while he repeated: 'You may constrain my body, and place me amongst you in the amphitheatre, but you cannot dispose of my mind nor of my eyes, which shall not, most assuredly, take any part in the spectacle. Thus shall I be there, as if I were not in it, and by this means I shall render myself superior to the violence which you practise on me, and to the passion by which you are possessed.' But he might as well have held his tongue; they drew him along, and partly perhaps to see if he could be as good as his word.

"In fine, they arrived and placed themselves as best they could; and while all the amphitheatre was in transports with these barbarous pleasures, Alipius guarded his heart from taking any part in them, keeping his eyes shut. And would to God!" continues St. Austin, "he had also stopped his ears; for having been struck by a great and universal shout,

\* Lib. vii. ch. 8.

which something extraordinary that had occurred in the combat excited among the people, he was seized with curiosity; and, merely wishing to ascertain what it could be,—persuaded that, no matter what it was, he would despise it on having seen it,—he opened his eyes, and in so doing inflicted on his own soul a wound more fatal than that which one of the gladiators had just received; he caused himself to fall far more dangerously than had the unfortunate gladiator whose overthrow had occasioned that inhuman shout which tempted him to give that one gaze. Cruelty glided into his heart in the same moment that the blood which was pouring out on the arena met his eyes; and very far from turning them away, he kept them riveted on the arena, drinking in long draughts of fury without perceiving it, and allowing himself to be intoxicated with this criminal pleasure.

“He was no longer the same Alipius who had been dragged there by force; he was a man of the same stamp as those who made up the crowd of the amphitheatre, and a meet companion for those who had brought him there. Behold him attached to the spectacle like the others, mingling his cries with theirs, feverish with excitement, and, like them, totally absorbed in the vicissitudes of the combat. In fine, he departed from the amphitheatre with such a passion for these sights, that he could think of nothing else. Not only was he ready to return with those who had been obliged to use force with him in the first instance, he was more infuriated about the gladiators than the rest, and ever ready to lead the way to the Coliseum.”

When any gladiator was wounded, the spectators exclaimed, “Habet,” or “Hoc habet,” “He has got it.” Ammianus Marcellinus informs us, that it was critical remarks of this kind that formed the staple of conversation and chitchat among the Roman ladies, who were more passionately fond of these spectacles than even the men. The wounded gladiator, (generally a war-captive, a Goth or a Dacian,) lowered his arms as

a sign of his being vanquished ; but his fate depended on the pleasure of the people, who, if they wished him to be saved, pressed *down* their thumbs,\* if to be slain, they turned *up* their thumbs,† and thus doomed him to receive the sword. The gladiator usually submitted to his fate with amazing fortitude. It was also as much the fashion to gamble on the struggles of the arena as of the circus. The betting went on as vehemently while bloody wounds were dealt as while the charioteers contended.‡ Till the year of the city 693, the spectators used to remain all day at an exhibition of gladiators, without intermission, till it was finished ; but then, for the first time, they were dismissed to take dinner and return ; which custom, as may be gathered from the anecdote of Alipius, as well as from many other passages, continued to be afterwards observed.

These inhuman rites of paganism had not been spared by the Christian apologists even under the reign of persecution.§ “Whoever,” says Lactantius, “takes delight in seeing the blood even of a criminal justly condemned to death befouls his conscience. But the pagans have turned the shedding of human blood into a pastime. So totally has humanity receded from men’s breasts, that they make their amusement consist in abetting murder, and sacrificing human life. Now, I ask, can those be called just, and pious, who not only suffer to be slain one who lies prostrate under a drawn sword, supplicating for life, but who demand that he be murdered ; who give their cruel and inhuman suffrages for death, not satiated with the wounds and gore of their hapless victim ? Nay, when stretched dead before them on the sand, they command the lifeless and bleeding body to be stabbed,

\* “Pollicem premebant.”—*Hor. Ep.* i. 18. 66.

† “Pollicem vertebant.”—*Juv.* iii. 36.

‡ Suet. Tit. viii. Domit. x. Martial ix. 68.

§ “The Christian apologists have not spared these bloody games which were introduced in the religious festivals of the pagans.”—*Gibbon*, ch. xxx. vol. iv. p. 53, note l.



over and over again, and cut and mangled, lest they should be deluded by a sham homicide. They get furious with the combatants who do not quickly despatch each other; and, as if they thirsted for human blood, cannot bear delay. Each company of new comers, as they pour into the circles, vociferate for fresh victims, that they may satiate their eyes.”\*

Christianity had not ceased to raise its voice against this atrocious practice; but paganism mocked at the scruples and pusillanimity of Christianity from the couches of its mighty temple. Honorius renewed the prohibitory law of Constantine, but to no purpose; the arena of the Coliseum still smoked with human gore, when Alaric was almost at the gates. At length a poor monk, named Telemachus, who had passed his life as a solitary in the deserts of the East, came to Rome, and, mingling with the spectators until the gladiators commenced their murderous struggle, suddenly bounded into the arena, and cast himself between their weapons. But where the venerable Ignatius, the disciple of the evangelist St. John, with myriads of others, had already suffered, the body of this glorious martyr to humanity sunk beneath the heavy fragments of marble seats, and ornaments, hurled down upon him from the amphitheatre, that seemed crowded with so many demons raging for human blood.†

“The same tastes,” says Sismondi, “pervaded all the provincial capitals; the same fury for scenic games, the only one of all their public passions which the Romans retained to the last.”‡

\* “Quin etiam percussos, jacentesque repeti jubent, et cadavera ictibus dissipari; nequis illos simulatâ morte deludat. Irascantur etiam pugnantibus, nisi celeriter è duobus alter occisus est; et tanquam humanum sanguinem sitiant, oderunt moras.”—*De Vero Cultu*, l. vi. 20.

† “Descendit tum et ipse in circum, ac dirimere concursum, et infesta arma tentabat. At spectatores cædis furore perciti, sitientis cruorem dæmonis, lapidibus obruunt moderatorem pacis.”—*Theodoret. Hist. Eccl.* l. v. 25.

‡ Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. ii. p. 121.

### CHAPTER III.

"C'est une tradition constante de tous les siècles, que la Babylone de Saint Jean, c'est l'ancienne Rome."—*Bossuet, Pref. sur l'Apocal.* vii.

"Dumb cities should speak to me, interpreting the past, and put threads into my hands, whereby I might guide myself a little way, and with a timid soberness, into the profitable labyrinth of prophecy."—*Faber's Sights, Thoughts, &c.*

WHAT wonder that the fathers of the church should have recognised, in this Rome, the characters of that mystical Babylon described by the evangelist St. John? Tertullian remarks how exactly the two Babylons, the historical and the mystical, that of Chaldea and that of Italy, resembled each other, in grandeur, in pride, in vastness of dominion, and in persecuting the saints.\* "When St. John," observes Irenæus, "foretells that Babylon is to be ravaged by ten kings, he manifestly indicates the dismemberment of the empire that exists at present." (A.D. 180.†) A similar view is taken by St. Dionysius of Alexandria, as quoted by Eusebius in two or three different places.‡ St. Augustine will have it that Rome was built as a new Babylon, daughter of the ancient one, and with the same destiny.§ Paulus Orosius, disciple of this great man, has drawn a parallel between the two cities.|| He has observed the same characteristics in both, and that after twelve hundred and sixty years

\* Tertull. adv. Jno. ix. et Contra Marc. l. iii. See also the passage already quoted from the book de Spectacul. where he designates Rome as the city, where Lucifer held his parliament. "Urbs in quâ Dæmoniorum conventus consedit." ch. vii.

† Contr. Hær. l. v. c. xxx. No. 2.

‡ Ecc. Hist. vii. 10, 22, 23, 25.

§ De Civ. Dei, xviii. 22.

|| Lib. ii. 3. vii. 2.

of domination and glory they were plundered in circumstances very much alike.\* In short, this was a mode of expression so established in the church, that St. Peter, in writing from Rome, makes use of it in his first epistle, where he says : "The church which is in Babylon salutes you." St. Jerome, so deeply versed in the sacred writings, and, as it were, naturalized to the style and imagery of the prophets, always adheres steadily to this interpretation.†

Let the reader only just picture to himself what must have been the aspect of the Rome of the seven hills; filled with temples and idols, the domicile of the gods, the patroness of every black art and sanguinary superstition; thirsting for human blood, and above all for the blood of Christ's disciples—and then glance at the description in the 17th chapter of St. John's prophecy :—

"And I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy; and the woman was clothed round about with purple and scarlet, and gilt with gold, and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of the abomination and filthiness of fornication; and on her forehead a name was written, 'A MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT.' *And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.* And the woman which thou sawest (said the angel, interpreting the vision to St. John,) is THE GREAT CITY which HATH kingdom over the kings of the earth." Thus it is not only the unanimous interpretation of the ancient fathers, but the assertion of the angel, nay, of the Spirit of truth, that the Babylon of the Apocalypse is no other than imperial Rome. This revelation had been made to St.

\* As early as the time of Cicero and Varro, it was the opinion of the Augurs, that the twelve vultures seen by Romulus were emblematic of the twelve centuries assigned to Rome by the fates. This interpretation is quoted from the celebrated Augur Vettius by Varro, l. xviii. *Antiquit. ap. Gibbon*, ch. xxxv. p. 321, vol. iv.

† De Ser. Eccl. in Es. xlvi. ; l. ii. adv. Jov. in fin. ; Ep. cli. ad Alg. &c.



John in the reign of the Roman emperor, Domitian. (A.D. 90—5.) How, therefore, could the fathers of the church help believing the Babylon “seated on seven mountains,” and on many waters, which are peoples, and nations, and tongues,—how could they help recognising the “seven-hilled city,” the “queen and goddess of the nations,” in *the great city which actually swayed the sceptre of universal empire, at the moment the beloved disciple of our Lord was suffering exile in Patmos, through the persecuting tyranny of a Roman emperor, whose will was law from Caledonia to the Libyan deserts, and from the shores of the Atlantic to the heart of Asia?*

“While that old (heathen) Rome,” says Henry Bullinger, one of the great lights and leaders of the anti-papal movement of the 16th century, the admirer and successor of Zuingle, “while ancient Rome,” he says, “refused to repent and be converted to Christ, forsaking her gods and her superstitions, she was at last condemned by Christ, according to a just law of retaliation; for with the measure used by Rome towards other nations, with the same did the nations measure back to Rome. Wherefore, rushing in upon her empire, Persians, Huns, Franks, Alemans, Visigoths, Vandals, Ostrogoths, rent it, and tore it to pieces; but Rome itself they at length besieged, sacked, occupied, plundered, dispeopled, consumed by fire, and reduced to a desert.”\* It is thus that the judgments denounced against Babylon in the 17th chapter of St. John are discerned by this Protestant authority, in the woes inflicted upon pagan Rome by the barbarians. Indeed this is not surprising. So transparent is the veil of allegory cast over the strongly marked features of the barbarian invasions, everything singular in their history,—what may be styled emphatically its characteristics are brought out in fine relief, delineated, and

\* “Dum interim vetus illa Roma serio nollet rescipiscere et converti ad Christum, relictis diis suis et superstitionibus, lege talionis tandem damnata est a Christo. Nam quâ mensurâ,” &c.—*Concion. in Apoc. Præf.* pag. 6.

chiselled off, with a firmness and precision that rendered it impossible to mistake the originals of these prophetic studies. The moment they appear on the field of history, we recognise them. "The kings," says the prophet, (verse 16,) "shall hate the harlot, (seated on the seven mountains,) and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall consume her with fire." An exact epitome of what the barbarian kings did to Rome. It is added that these "kings are without kingdoms." A striking peculiarity, certainly. Need it be stated that the destroyers of the western empire, and of Rome, were, without exception, all adventurer-kings—daring chiefs, who were either driven forth, or came of their own accord, from the wilds of the north and north east, resolved to win new and sunny realms by their swords? "And the ten horns which thou sawest," said the angel, "are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but shall receive power as *kings one hour after the beast*." Both the Ostro and Visigoths, the Franks and Alemans, the Vandals, Heruli, Huns, &c. all succeeded in erecting, upon the ruins of the empire, certain fabrics of power, admirably characterised as "quasi kingdoms" by the prophet. Scarcely has the Vandal dynasty been established in Africa, when it is utterly swept from the face of the earth: the same was the fate of the Gothic kingdoms of the south of France, of the south of Spain, of Italy; so that well may they be said to have obtained power "*as kings one hour after the beast*."

Another characteristic of these kings, still more curious, is this; that, while "they have but one design," that of wreaking vengeance upon Rome, and making a spoil of the empire, "they shall," notwithstanding, according to St. John, "deliver their strength and power to the beast," that is, to the self-same empire, (verse 13.) Nothing, of course, is more notorious, or more familiar to the reader, as respects the history of the hundred and fifty years, from towards the close of the third to the middle of the fifth century,

than that the armies of the empire were, for the most part recruited from among the barbarians. Alaric was a condottiero, or independent chief of mercenaries, in the pay of the Roman emperors: he had served under the banner of the great Theodosius, and received the title of *στρατηγός*, or generalissimo, from Honorius.\* He was actually in the Roman service as governor of Illyricum, at the time he was preparing to invade Italy. So were Ricimer, Odoacer, and Theodoric, the lieutenants of the emperors. From the death of Theodosius the Great, the Roman armies, that is the mercenary barbarians in the pay of Rome, were almost exclusively officered and commanded by barbarians. While plundering such cities as Trèves and Cologne, the Franks, beginning to settle in Belgium and on the left bank of the Rhine called themselves the soldiers of the emperors; so did the Burgundians in eastern Gaul, as did the Visigoths in the south.† Even after the first taking of Rome by the Goths, they offer their swords to the emperor for the recovery of Spain. Besides Alans and Goths, we find, in the Roman armies, Heruli and Lombards. The Huns served against Radogast,‡ and the same writer, Orosius, says that Alaric was a count of the Roman empire at the time he besieged and sacked the capital.§ Stilico and Aetius were of barbaric origin and bias, and fought for Rome against the invaders, much more in the spirit of paid champions than of patriots. In Rome's last battle, that against Attila on the plains of Chalons, it may well be doubted if there was a single Roman in the ranks or in command; unquestionable it is, that, if any there were, it was impossible to discern them among the barbarian masses—Goths, Alans, Burgundians, Franks—gathered by the indefatigable genius of Aetius, and marshalled by him with a skill and fortune worthy of

\* Sozom. viii. 8, 10; iv. 25.

† Procopius, l. i. de Bel. Goth. ch. 2.

‡ Oros. l. vii. c. 39.

§ Lib. ii. c. 3.



another Cæsar, under the old birds of conquest ; not, however, to fight for the Roman empire, but to prevent such a partner as the king of the Huns from meddling with their own joint stock interest, already acquired in the plunder and partition of it.

Again it is said of these kings without kingdoms, at once the subjects and the subverters, the allies and the enemies of Rome, that they "shall fight against the Lamb"—against our Divine Lord. Now the barbarians, by whom the seven-hilled city was destroyed, were, *without exception*, Arians ; that is, rebels against the Lamb, who strove to dethrone the consubstantial Son of God by stripping him of his Divinity. Alaric, Astolphus, Genseric, Ricimer, Odoacer, Theodoric, Vitiges, Totila, who all lent a hand to the work of chastisement, were Arians : both Goths and Vandals were persecutors of the Catholics ; but not one single barbarian king or chief, who was a pagan, ever entered Rome ; and when the advent of Radogast and Attila, both heathens, seemed inevitable, they were visibly driven back by the hand of God. But the prophecy adds, that "they were to be conquered by the Lamb ;" and the barbarians who destroyed Rome, while denying Christ's Divinity, were all, without exception, brought to recognise it. They were converted to Catholic unity principally during the pontificate of St. Gregory the Great, as we shall see hereafter, and became most zealously devoted and attached to the chair of Peter.

But to dwell upon even a moiety of the very singular and startling traits of reciprocal similitude between history and prophecy, in this instance, would be to re-write the annals of the church during the first five centuries ; for they are adumbrated with singular sublimity and effect in the prophecy of St. John.\* Let it, therefore, be enough to subjoin one

\* Even that enigma of ch. xiii. verse 18, which has baffled so many ingenious efforts to wrest it, so as to serve the designs of fanaticism or faction, not only ceases to be obscure, but becomes

other passage from that eminent reformer, Henry Bullinger. In commenting on what is said by St. John, as to the heads of the beast, or harlot, (for they are under some respects identical,) being inscribed with the names of blasphemy, he remarks:—"On the heads were written names of blasphemy," that is, whatever is most blasphemous will be found conspicuously paraded as it were upon her heads; for if you look to the hills of Rome, in the first place, the mount of the Capitol, (the very head of the city,) you will find to be designated by Cicero, the 'domicile of the gods.' Also, on these heights were to be seen the temples of Jupiter Stator (?), of Jupiter Tonans, of Jupiter Pistor, besides the temples of Saturn, of Juno, of Hercules, of Janus, of Venus, of Apollo," &c. He adds that the blasphemies of Rome waxed mighty, especially when Titus and Vespasian, after the destruction of Jerusalem, seemed to have conquered and bound the God of the Jews, like the gods of the other nations: carrying the sacred emblems and vessels of his temple to adorn their triumph. But that the Almighty permitted the saints to be persecuted by the beast, he finds verified in the ten persecutions from Nero up to the triumph of Constantine; at which period the "inhabitants of heaven" were denounced as impious, as seducers, disturbers of social order, and devoted to foul super-

an index to the true interpretation of the Divine prophecy, when considered from the proper point of view. Thus several singular coincidences between what is said in the 13th chapter, and what is narrated in history, make it evident that allusion is there made to the great persecution under Diocletian. Well, to test the interpretation we try what is "the number of Diocletian's name," and we find his number, and his alone, is 666. As Lact. tells us, *de Mor. Pers.* ch. 9, his name was originally Diocles, and he resumed that same name after his abdication, *ibid.* c. 19, therefore his proper name was Diocles Augustus, the latter epithet being essential to his designation, to distinguish him from every other Diocles. Let the name then be written in Roman letters, and you have in it the number 666. You have DIoCLes aVgVstVs. *i.e.*, you have DCLVVVI, or putting X for two V's, their equivalent, you have DCLXVI. *i.e.*, 666. Q.E.D.

stitutions.”\* He further remarks, how obstinately the Romans clung to paganism, notwithstanding so many wonderful opportunities of conversion ; and that, not content with spurning the religion of Christ, they were constantly plotting, both in the capital and in the provinces, for the restoration of idolatry.†

\* Henr. Bulling. ad cap. xiii. Concion., supr. cit. 55, 56, p. 166, 168, 169.

† Ibid. p. 234.



## CHAPTER IV.

“Un événement qui paroît marqué dans l’Apocalypse avec une entière évidence est la chute de l’ancienne Rome, et le démembrement de son empire sous Alaric.”—*Bossuet*.

“And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse bridles.”—*Revel.* xiv. 20.

THE barbarians who had broken in over the Roman frontiers, after the disgraceful overthrow of Valerian in Persia, were at length effectually repulsed by the first Christian emperor. During a period of fifty years they had spread havoc and devastation over every quarter of the Roman world; but Constantine not only drove them back within their ancient limits, but crushed, and humbled them upon their own territories. By the defeat of the Roman armies in a new invasion of Persia, madly embarked in by Julian the Apostate, the empire was again left exposed to their ravages. He had denuded the Rhine and Danube of their garrisons; and the legions that should have been left to guard them, and keep the barbarians in awe, either perished in the infatuated enterprise, or returned sadly disheartened and shorn of their renown, to be routed and trampled down in their first encounter with the Goths.\* The ages were long passed when Rome

\* In the battle of Adrianople, fought August 9, A. D. 378, the Roman Emperor Valens (a persecutor of the Catholics) was slain, and his body could not be found; and the Romans experienced such a total defeat that the historians compare it to that of Cannæ, in which their loss was 10,000 prisoners, 5,600 cavalry, and 70,000 infantry killed on the field. (Polyb. l. iii.) Livy (xxii. 49) very naturally lessens the numbers. The army at Cannæ consisted of 87,200 effective men: only 370 horse and 3,000 foot escaped. (Polyb. *ibid.*) In speaking of the battle of Adrianople, Ammianus Marcellinus says: “Nec ullâ præter Cannensam pugnam ita ad internecionem acta legitur,” &c.—L. xxxi. 13.

could make any effective rally after such disasters ; it was found almost impossible to recruit the ranks ; and the terrors with which the achievements of Constantine the Great had again invested the Roman arms were totally dispelled. The provinces continued to be devastated, and filled with scenes of horror for the space of forty years, until the consummate valour and prudence of Theodosius the Great procured a brief adjournment of the fatal hour which "made haste to come."

"If the subjects of Rome," says the historian of the Decline and Fall of the Empire, "could be ignorant of their obligations to the great Theodosius, they were too soon convinced how painfully the spirit and abilities of their deceased emperor had supported the frail and mouldering edifice of the republic. He died in the month of January ; and before the end of the winter of the same year, the Gothic nation was in arms. The barbarian auxiliaries (taken into the pay of Rome) erected their independent standard, and boldly avowed the hostile designs which they had long cherished in their ferocious minds. Their countrymen, who had been condemned, by the conditions of the last treaty with Theodosius, to a life of tranquillity and labour in the border provinces, deserted their farms at the first sound of the trumpet ; and eagerly resumed the weapons they had reluctantly laid down. The barriers of the Danube were thrown open ; the savage warriors of Scythia issued from their forests ; and the uncommon severity of the winter allowed the poet to remark, in describing their invasion, that they rolled their ponderous waggons over the broad and icy back of the indignant river.

"The Goths, instead of being impelled as heretofore by the blind and headstrong passions of their chiefs, were now directed by the bold and artful genius of Alaric. That renowned leader was descended from the noble race of the Balti, which yielded only to the royal dignity of the Amali. He disdained to trample any longer on the prostrate and ruined countries of

Thrace and Dacia, and he resolved to seek a plentiful harvest of fame and riches in a province which had hitherto escaped the ravages of war. Alaric had traversed without resistance the plains of Macedonia and Thessaly as far as the foot of Mount Œta, a steep and woody range of hills, almost impervious to his cavalry. But the troops which had been posted to defend the straits of Thermopylæ retreated; and the fertile fields of Phocis and Bœotia were instantly covered with a deluge of barbarians, who massacred the males of an age to bear arms, and drove away the beautiful females with the spoil and cattle of the flaming villages. Athens purchased exemption from havoc by the surrender of all its wealth. All the rest of a country, enriched with the glory and beauty of former ages, and hallowed by the memory of the highest moral and intellectual culture which human nature ever attained, was given up to the unbridled fury of barbarians, who had already earned the celebrity which has ever since identified the Gothic name with the destroyers of civilization.\* Corinth, Argos, Sparta, yielded without resistance to their arms; and the most fortunate of the inhabitants were saved by death from beholding the slavery of their families, and the conflagration of their cities. "The invasion of the Goths," says the historian already quoted, "contributed, at least accidentally, to extirpate the last remains of paganism; and the mysteries of Ceres, which had subsisted eighteen hundred years, did not survive the destruction of Eleusis, and the calamities of Greece."†

This, however, was only a trifling foray, by which Alaric wished to discipline his bands for greater enterprises, and to give them a zest for the plunder of Rome. The fame, the beauty, the wealth of Italy, which he had twice visited in the service of the empire, had long inflamed his cupidity: he was above all incited by the fierce ambition to be the first to plant

\* See Sismondi, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. ii. p. 108 and p. 127.

† *History of Decline and Fall*, &c. ch. xxx. vol. iv. p. 30—36.



the standard of revenge upon the haughty walls of the seven-hilled city, and to enrich his Goths with the spoils of three hundred triumphs.\* For four years after his retreat from Greece, he continued in the Illyrian prefecture, industriously providing armour and weapons of the best temper and fabric, and in training his forces, according to Roman discipline. The birth of Alaric, the glory of his past exploits, and the confidence of his future designs, insensibly united the entire body of the Gothic nation under his victorious standard. With the unanimous consent of their chieftains, he was made their king, and installed in this dignity according to the ancient custom by being elevated on a shield. Armed with the double power of a Roman general, and king of the Goths, and seated on the verge of the two empires, he alternately sold his deceitful promises to the courts of Constantinople and Milan, until his plans were matured for his long meditated march on the eternal city.

In the autumn of 402, he forced the passes of the Julian Alps, and descended, like a whirlwind of fire and blood, upon the Frioul and province of Venetia. "Fame, encircling with terror her gloomy wings, proclaimed the march of the barbarian army, and filled Italy with consternation." The apprehensions of each individual were increased in just proportion to the measure of his fortune; and the most timid, who had already embarked their valuable effects, meditated their escape to the island of Sicily, or the African coast.†

When at a later period than this, the Christian hermit endeavoured to dissuade the Gothic king from marching upon Rome, he vowed to the venerable ascetic, that he was driven to capture and destroy that city by a supernatural impulse, which urged him forward incessantly with a power that he could not resist;

\* "*Alpibus Italiæ ruptis penetrabis ad urbem*," was the prediction of Claudian (*de Bel. Getico*, 547,) as early as 403. See Gibbon, *ubi supra*, p. 40.

† Gibbon, *ubi supra*, p. 42.

and it cannot be doubted, that his office towards the great queen and patroness of idolatry was similar to that of Cyrus towards Babylon, and of Titus towards Jerusalem; but had he succeeded in capturing Rome in this first invasion, there would have been no room for the occurrences which have made the destruction of the seven-hilled city the most impressive and imperishable monument of the triumphs achieved over paganism by Christianity.\*

The Goths were compelled to retreat from Italy; and it was during the games and spectacles with which Rome celebrated her victory and liberation, that the martyrdom of Telemachus, the monk, took place as we have described. Besides the gladiatorial exhibitions given on that occasion, there were magnificent circensian games. "As soon as the appointed number of chariot-races was concluded, the decoration of the circus was suddenly changed: the hunting of wild beasts afforded a various and splendid entertainment; and the chase was succeeded by a military dance, which seems in the lively description of Claudian to present the image of a modern tournament."† A lofty arch of triumph was erected to commemorate, according to the language of the inscription, the total and irremediable ruin inflicted on the barbarians.

Short lived, however, were the displays of exultation. Radogast, king of the Germanic nations which inhabited the southern shores of the Baltic, declared that he had made a vow never to return his sword to its scabbard, till he had levelled the walls of Rome, and divided its treasures among his followers. A host of warriors, nay, whole nations, were eager to second him. The Burgundians, the Vandals, the Silingi, the Gepidæ, the Suevi, and the Alans, took arms at the same time. More than 200,000 warriors marched

\* "Ma non era ancor junto il tempo che Dio aveva destinato di punire Roma, capitale del Romano impero bensì, ma anchedi tutti i vizii, e in cui per anche l' idolatria ostinatamente si nascondea."—*Murat. Ann. d' Ital. ann.* 405.

† Gibbon, ubi supra, p. 52.

under his banners : their women, children, and slaves amounted to 200,000 more, and the country they left behind them was a desert.

No sooner had the dreadful tidings of the vow and approach of Radogast spread through Rome, than the whole city was in a ferment of blasphemy against the name of Christ. Every tongue was loud in heaping insults and curses on Christianity, as if it were some plague, to which were to be attributed all calamities either past or impending. The renewal of the sacrifices, rites, and observances, under which so many centuries of conquest had passed over Rome, were furiously demanded.

"Everywhere the cry was reiterated," says St. Augustine, "that Radogast could never be resisted, because he sacrificed to the immortal gods. It was loudly proclaimed by the pagans, that they dreaded not so much his arms as his piety." This consisted in the daily immolation of human victims on the altars of Thor and Woden ; and to such a pitch were they transported by this dire fanaticism, that they secretly rejoiced in the anticipation of calamities, which were to stamp *their* religion with the approval of Heaven, and to brand that of the Christians.\*

The success of Radogast would have been proclaimed as a manifest stroke of vengeance from the gods for the slights they had suffered, and as a divine condemnation of Christianity, whose temples and professors would have been the chief objects of this fierce heathen's fury. But in permitting Alaric and Radogast to come as if within sight of Rome, the object of the Almighty was, in the first place, according to St. Augustine and Orosius, to terrify the wicked city into repentance, by showing her from afar the chastisement that awaited her perversity, and, in the next place, events were so ordered, that the whole world might recognise, in the fate of Rome, the award of Heaven between the two rival religions.† The

\* Gibbon, *ubi supra*, p. 61.

† Paul. Oros. *Histor. adv. Pagan.* l. vii. 37 ; St. August. *de Civ.*

‡ *Dei*, l. v. c. 23.



champion of paganism was permitted to advance sufficiently to wind up all minds to the highest pitch of excitement; and then, the same power that smote the hosts of Sennacherib destroyed the countless army of Radogast, without the loss of a soldier, or even the unsheathing of a sword, by the imperial armies. This is the account of Orosius. It tallies exactly with the version of the affair, both in St. Augustine's *City of God*, (book v. ch. 23,) and in a sermon of his—the 29th on the Gospel of St. Luke: both accounts are substantially confirmed by Zosimus the pagan historian, who says that the barbarians were surprised, and cut to pieces by Stilico at the head of the Roman legions. The remnant of the enormous host that escaped the sword were either sold into slavery at a vile price, or perished of hunger, thirst, and disease upon the heights of Fiesole. "According to all appearances," says the impartial Muratori, "there was something miraculous in the termination of this tragedy, which had confounded Italy with terror."\*

However, if any doubt could still be harboured as to which religion was favoured by Divine protection, which pursued by Divine vengeance, that doubt must have been dispelled by the astounding occurrences that took place when the Eternal City was at last surprised by Alaric, at the dead of night.

\* Ann. d' Ital. ann. 405.

## CHAPTER V.

"Go out of her, my people: that you may not be partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues."—*Revel.* xviii. 4.

"In Christi, vero, villula tota rusticitas, et extra psalmos silentium est. Quocunque te verteris, arator stivam tenens 'Alleluia' decantat, sudans messor psalmis se avocat, et curva attendens vitem falce, vinitor aliquid Davidicum canit."—*S. Hieron.* Ep. 45.

MEANWHILE, these tokens of impending destruction were not lost upon the Roman Christians. They doubted not that the hour of retribution for "Babylon the great," so loaded with enormities and so incorrigible, was making haste to come: in obedience to the voice of prophecy, vast numbers of them withdrew, and, like the first disciples flying from Jerusalem, sought shelter in the wilderness. In the dismemberment of the provinces, and the utter inability of the government to make head against the calamities that were rapidly overwhelming everything in disorder and ruin, the faithful did not hesitate to recognise the crumbling of those "feet, partly of iron and partly of clay," upon which the colossal emblem beheld by Daniel was sustained. The extent to which the faithful were influenced by these convictions can hardly be appreciated in this age. There seems to have been an almost universal migration from the cities to the most sequestered solitudes. Society divided itself into two bands. The one, with that kind of frenzy for enjoyment that is felt midst the despair of shipwreck, gave loose rein to every passion, and were oftener surprised in their theatres and scenes of revelry by the barbarians, than encountered on their ramparts, or in the fields;\* the other

\* "Trèves, the capital of the Gallic prefecture, was not the only city which was surprised and pillaged by the barbarians, while its citizens, crowned with chaplets, were rapturously applauding the games of the circus."—*Sismondi*, vol. ii. p. 24.

consisted of the most fervent of the Christians ; and *their* thoughts and occupations were such as might be expected from persons, who looked out from caves and deserts for the tremendous catastrophe that was momentarily expected. The sands of Libya, the mountains of Lebanon, and the Syrian deserts ; the islets of the Tyrrhenian sea, the rocky caves of Thebais, and all the hallowed scenes of Palestine, were become literally populous with these fugitives.\* Some of them lived together in community : the females always did so ; others lived dispersed as hermits in lonely cells ; but all were alike intent upon attaining to the most sublime perfection.

“ Not content with observing a medium between vice and virtue,” says Sozomen, “ their delight is centred exclusively in what is perfect ; and they regard as wicked whoever avoiding to do evil, still neglects to do good. For they not only aspire to possess virtue, but to keep it in constant exercise. They hold the glory that is acquired from mortals in sovereign contempt. Their great aim, in the divine service, is the attainment of interior perfection, and purity ; and hence, contemning mere external and bodily imperfections and defilements, they deem that sin alone can soil, or render them deformed or odious, in the sight of Heaven. These feelings render them in a great degree indifferent to, and, as it were, exalts them beyond the reach of, extrinsic evils ; nor have the perturbations of life, or the severest pressure of necessity, the power to turn them aside from their

\* See S. Hieron. Com. in Ezech. Proph. lib. iii. in præf. See, for instance, his list of arrivals in Jerusalem, and the other holy retreats of Palestine.—“ Quicumque in *Galliâ* fuerit primus, huc properat. *Divisus ab orbe nostro Britannus*, si in religione processerit, occiduo sole dimisso, quærit locum famâ sibi tantum et Scripturarum relatione cognitum. Quid referamus *Armenios*, quid *Persas*, quid *Indiæ* et *Ethiopiæ* populos : ipsamque juxta *Ægyptum fertilem monachorum* : *Pontum*, et *Cappadociam*, *Syriam Cœlen*, et *Mesopotamiam*, *cunctaque Orientis examina* ?”—S. Hieron. Ep. 44. Also Gibb. ch. xxxvii. p. 392, vol. iv. ; Lingard, Angl. Sax. Antiq. p. 102 ; and the ecclesiastical histories generally.



holy purpose. They are not mortified by insults, not excited to revenge by injustice, nor downcast in mind either by penury or disease. On the contrary, they rejoice in all these things, and through the whole course of life think of nothing else but to be patient in adversity, to be meek, content with little, and, by all means in as far as human frailty will permit, to become like to God himself.\* Making use of the things of this world, as if merely in passing, they are never tormented by greediness for gain, nor trouble themselves with providing for anything beyond the present want of nature ; but admiring a state of existence simple, with few wants, and disembarrassed from the solicitude and pain of providing for the many with which art has surrounded life, their minds are ever free to contemplate that celestial beatitude, for which they sigh perpetually, and to which they are ready to fly with rapture, at a moment's notice. And, while ever intent on cultivating piety, they fly from the least appearance of obscenity in discourse, and cannot endure the conversation of the dissolute. Contracting the circle of its necessities, they constrain the body to be satisfied with very few things : by temperance, they subdue the passions, coerce each vicious propensity by strengthening the opposite virtues through sedulous exercise ; and, by observing a uniform order in all their actions, succeed in acquiring the habit of perfect moderation in all.

“ So zealously are they devoted to the fostering of concord among their fellow-creatures, and to the universal establishment of the communion of fraternal charity, that they are careful to provide hospitality not only for friends, but for strangers ; they distribute all their possessions among the poor ; never intrude upon rejoicing with importunate sadness, and never fail to condole and sympathize with the afflicted. In a word, all their energies and aspirations aim at effecting good. With mild severity of expression, and with

\* “ Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”—*St. Matt.* vi. &c.

instances derived from inspired wisdom, they reprimand and instruct the worldly minded and effeminate ; but their discourse, ever tempered with humility and sweetness even in reproof, and altogether exempt from contentious and angry feeling, does not fail to descend like healing balm upon the souls of those who hear it.”\*

Distinguished amongst these holy anchorets, by the fervency of his penitential austerities, and by his immortal labours on the inspired writings, the great St. Jerome abode at this time in his convent at Bethlehem, and engaged himself in expounding the prophecy of Ezekiel. It seemed to him an entertainment befitting the interval of suspense, that was expected to be every moment interrupted by the downfall of the Roman world. “*Pascitur his animus,*” he says, “*donec pedes statuæ quondam ferrei, fragilitate digitorum fictilium conterantur.*”† And not content with the holy meditations of his cell, or with dictating them to his meek amanuensis for the instruction and edification of posterity, this august Christian sage often paused as he read the inspired volume, and lifted his voice in warning of the vials of wrath which he saw were ready to be emptied on the guilty and unrepenting city. These tones, like the voice of another Baptist calling to repentance, resounded even through the voluptuous palaces of Rome, and charmed not a few of their patrician beauties to exchange the dream of pleasure, so soon to be interrupted by the clangour of the Gothic trumpet, for the sacred vigils and austerities of the holy land.

“Read,” he cries, “the Apocalypse of John: mark what is written of the woman clothed in scarlet, with the mystic inscription on her forehead, and seated upon seven hills, and of the destruction of Babylon. ‘Go out of her, my people, saith the Lord, that you be not made partakers of her crimes, and partners in the plagues which shall afflict her.’ Leave

\* Sozom. Hist. Eccl. lib. i. ch. 12.

† Comment. in Ezech. Proph. lib. viii. in Præf.

the proud city, to exult in everlasting uproar and dissipation, satiating her blood-thirstiness in the arena, and her insane passion for circus games. Leave it to her to trample under foot every sense of shame in her lascivious theatres. How different the scenes that invite you hither? The most rustic simplicity is characteristic of the natal village of our Redeemer, and sacred hymns and psalmody are the only interruptions of the heavenly stillness and serenity which reign on every side. Walk forth into the fields; you startle with mingled astonishment and delight, to find that 'Halleluiah' is the burden of the ploughman's song, that it is with some inspired canticle the reaper recreates himself, in reposing at noon-tide from his overpowering toil; and that it is the royal psalmist's inspiration that attunes the voice of the vine-dresser, as, book in hand, he plies his task all day.

"Oh, when shall that blessed day arrive," he continues, "when it will be our own delight to conduct you to the cave of the nativity? Together to mingle our tears with those of Mary, and of the Virgin mother, in the sepulchre of our Lord; to press the wood on which he redeemed us to our throbbing lips; and, in ardent desires to ascend with him from Mount Olivet? We will hasten thence to Bethany, to see Lazarus come forth in his winding sheet, and to the banks of that blessed stream, sanctified by the baptism of the Word made flesh. Thence to the huts of the shepherds, who heard the canticle of 'Glory to God on high,' and, 'tidings of great joy,' as they were keeping the night watch over their flocks. We will pray at the tomb of David, and meditate under the steep precipice where inspiration used to come on the prophet Amos, until we hear again the living clangour of his shepherd-horn. In Mambre we shall commune in spirit with the great patriarchs and their consorts who were buried there: visit the fountain where the eunuch was baptized by Philip; and in Samaria adore the relics of St. John the Baptist, of Abdias, and Eleseus, and devoutly explore the caverns where the choirs



of the prophets were miraculously fed, in the days of famine and persecution. We will extend our pilgrimage to Nazareth, and, as the name implies, behold the *flower* of Galilee. Hard by is Cana, where he changed water into wine. Thence to Mount Tabor, where our prayer shall be, that our rest may not only be with Moses and Elias, but in the eternal tabernacle where we shall enjoy the beatified vision of the Father and the Holy Ghost. Thence returning, we shall see the lake Genasereth, and the wilderness where the merciful Jesus feasted the multitudes; and Naïm shall not be passed by unheeded, where he gave back to the disconsolate mother 'her only son.' Hermon shall be pointed out, and the torrent of Endor where Sisera was overcome: and Capharnaum, the theatre of so many miracles. Thence going up to Jerusalem, as it were in the retinue of our Lord, as the disciples were wont to do, we will pass through Silo and Bethel; and, having made the circuit of so many scenes, consecrated by the presence, the preaching, and the miracles of the Son of God; to that grotto where he was born to us as a Saviour, we shall at last return: perpetually to hymn his praises, to deplore our trespasses with frequent tears: to give our days and nights to holy orisons, as if smitten with the same love which exclaimed, 'Him whom my soul hath yearned for, have I found: I will hold him, and not let him go!'"\*

It was not alone the devout Paula, illustrious for her virtues, for her lofty pedigree, and for her more than princely fortune, that was induced to listen to these warnings and invitations.† The Lausiac history, written by Palladius, who flourished in that age, informs us, that St. Melania was prompted by a presentiment of its impending doom, to forsake the city, and that several senators and others were also

\* S. Hier. Ep. 44, 45.

† The city of Nicopolis, which Augustus had founded as an eternal monument of the Actian victory, was a portion only of the property of the devout Paula. Vide Hier. in Præf. Com. ad Ep. ad Tit. tom. ix. p. 243.

induced by her advice to quit it.\* The epistles of St. Jerome speak of many others, especially ladies of patrician rank, who took up their abode around Bethlehem, and, soon after, had the melancholy consolation of alleviating the destitution and sorrows of many a gay companion, who had staid behind to laugh at their superstitious timidity, until the tempest descended, and drove them to the convent doors to beg for raiment and for bread. The holy places are described by St. Jerome as crowded by pilgrims of all countries, and from the opposite extremities of the earth. He depicts with vivid language and enthusiasm the catholic harmony in which all were blended by religion, notwithstanding so many diversities of manners and dialects. "*Tot penè psallentium chori, quot gentium diversitates. Vox quidem dissona ; sed una religio.*" Nay, the impression that Rome was on the verge of being overtaken by the terrible woes of the Apocalypse, had become diffused even through the barbaric nations. Their kings and chieftains proclaimed themselves the ministers of Divine vengeance — so many scourges in the hand of God : they deemed it an acceptable service "to hate the harlot, and make her miserable." And it was when all minds were thus erect to witness this most terrible example of retribution long deferred, that, in the language of the prophet, "Great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the indignation of his wrath :—because in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."†

\* Ch. 118. See also S. Hier. Ep. 79.

† Rev. xvi. 19, and xviii. 24.

## CHAPTER VI.

“And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath,”—*Revel.* xvi. 19.

“Sardoniciis quodammodo herbis omnem Populum Romanum putes esse saturatum : moritur et ridet.”—*S. Salvian*, l. vi. p. 144.

LONG had the ancient queen of empire looked out, as if from a tower of security, upon the calamities that overwhelmed her provinces, and tore away her conquests. But instead of being alarmed, or moved to pity, her proud heart seemed to dilate with arrogance at each new disaster ; for in proportion as the empire was made desolate, her wealth and magnitude became increased. Multitudes, fleeing with their riches and most costly effects, sought to secure themselves from the pursuit of the invaders within her impregnable walls, and to drown their cares and their regrets amidst intoxicating scenes of pomp and revelry. Brutishly reckless of calamities they had no means of averting, and which, whenever they *did* come, would bring with them the final insensibility of all suffering, her populace, who lived on the public distributions of food, and spent their entire lives in dissipation, had no care but for the granaries of Africa, apparently beyond the reach of danger. At the other extremity of the scale, her senators were nurtured in the same indifference. Their possessions were almost invariably situated in remote provinces : he who learned that his harvests in Gaul or Britain had been burned, could still reckon on his Spanish and African estates : he who could not protect his Thracian fields from the ravage of the Goth, calculated that his Syrian olive grounds, at least, were safe from the incursions of the Persian. However severe the losses



they sustained, they scarcely ever amounted to ruin ; sometimes they might determine the patrician from entering into marriage, but never did they cause him to change his luxurious habits.\* According to Olym-piodorus, a Greek historian, there were many of the Roman nobles of that day whose annual income amounted to four millions of gold, besides another million and a quarter paid them in kind from their estates. He estimates the income of a second class of the nobility at a million and a half, and a third class at one million, exclusive of the payments made by their tenants in corn, wine, oil, and other natural productions. He says that Symmachus, who was accounted a nobleman of only moderate fortune, expended two millions of gold in shows and other popular entertainments, when his son was entering his pretorship ; and that another patrician, on a similar occasion, expended four millions of gold, on the gladiatorial, circensian, and other games and spectacles with which he amused the Romans for seven successive days.†

The arches of triumph, the trophies of victories beyond number that met her gaze to whatever side she turned ; the temples of her tutelary gods, of her heroes and emperors, deified for their achievements in arms ; the recollections so proudly cherished in her patrician palaces, that crowded the Forum, the Capitol, the Campus Martius, made it impossible to doubt her immemorial claim to sway the sceptre of the nations. How should she tremble, amid so many pledges of dominion, whose walls—cemented by the gore of barbarian victims—were sufficiently guarded by the terrors of the Roman name, and by the dreadful shades of so many conquerors ? “ She said in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow ; and sorrow I shall not see : ” nor could she believe it to be more than

\* See Sismondi, *ubi supra*, p. 120.

† Olymp. ap. Phot. p. 198. The gold piece was of the same value as the gold florin, or worth about five shillings sterling ; so that the first class nobles were worth about 1,300,000*l.* a-year !

a night-mare affection, arising from over surfeiting and debauch, when the bands of Alaric, impatient for the moment of assault, came bursting through the marble halls and pleasure grounds of her suburban villas, and rushed, and thundered onward over every opposition until they broke like a deluge of blood and confusion against her gates.

“The first emotions of the nobles and the people,” says Gibbon, “were those of surprise and indignation, that a vile barbarian should dare to insult the capital of the world. But their arrogance was soon humbled by misfortune. By a skilful disposition of his numerous forces, Alaric encompassed the walls, commanded the twelve principal gates, intercepted all communication with the adjoining country, and diligently guarded the navigation of the Tiber, upon which Rome depended for the sustenance of her innumerable population.”\*

The doomed city gradually experienced the distress of scarcity, and at length the horrid calamities of famine.† The poorer citizens, who were unable to purchase the necessities of life, solicited the precarious charities of the rich ; and for a while the public misery was alleviated by the humanity of the pious Læta, the widow of the emperor Gratian, who had fixed her residence at Rome, and consecrated to the use of the indigent, the princely revenue which she received from the grateful successors of her husband. But these private and temporary donatives were insufficient to appease the hunger of a numerous people ; and the progress of famine invaded the marble palaces of the senators themselves. The persons of both sexes, who had been educated in the enjoy-

\* The noble lady Serena, the widow of Stilico, was put to death by the senate immediately on the appearance of the Goths ; and the pagan, Zosimus, assures his readers, (l. v. c. 37,) that Serena was thus punished by the heathen gods, because she had been guilty of taking a collar of inestimable value from the neck of Rhea, the mother of all the gods.

† Gibbon, vol. iv. p. 114.

ment of ease and luxury, discovered how little is requisite to supply the demands of nature; and lavished their unavailing treasures of gold and silver, to obtain the coarse and scanty sustenance which they would have formerly rejected with disdain. The food the most repugnant to sense or imagination, the aliments the most unwholesome and pernicious to the constitution, were eagerly devoured, and fiercely disputed by the rage of hunger. A dark suspicion was entertained, that some desperate wretches fed on the bodies of their fellow-creatures whom they had secretly murdered; and even mothers, (such was the horrid conflict of the two most powerful instincts implanted by nature in the human breast,) even mothers are said to have tasted the flesh of their slaughtered infants.\*

Many thousands of the inhabitants expired in their houses, or in the street, for want of sustenance; and as the public sepulchres without the walls were in the power of the enemy, the stench which arose from so many putrid and unburied carcasses infected the air; and the miseries of famine were speedily aggravated by those of pestilence.

In this extremity, two ambassadors, Basilius, who had been president of Spain, and John, the first tribune of the Palatine notaries, were appointed by the senate to go to the Gothic camp, and sue for peace. When they were introduced into the tent of Alaric, they maintained a haughty bearing, to make it appear that they were equally prepared for war as for peace. They said that if the king of the Goths refused to sign a fair and honourable capitulation, he might sound his trumpets, and prepare to give battle to an innumerable people, inured to arms, and animated by despair. "The thicker the grass, the easier it is mowed," was the reply with which the barbarian mocked them, to the great amusement of his martials,

\* "Ad nefandos cibos erupit esurientium rabies, et sua invicem membra laniarent, dum mater non parcit lactanti infantiaë."—*St. Hieron. ad Principiam*, tom. i. p. 121.



who burst into loud and insulting laughter at this stroke of rustic wit. He then dictated the terms on which alone they might expect to have the city spared. First, the surrender into his hands of *all* the gold and silver within the walls of Rome, whether it belonged to the state or to individuals; *all* the rich and precious movables; and *all* the barbarians detained as slaves.

"If such, O king!" said one of the ambassadors, "are the things you must have from us, may we ask what it is you intend to leave us?"

"Your lives," replied the haughty conqueror.

There being no longer any human hope, it was resolved by the Romans to resort once more to the aid of the immortal gods: it was alleged by the advocates of the measure, that the city of Narmi had been recently saved from the Goths by certain mystic rites and sacrifices of the Etruscans who were then in Rome; and these same execrable practices—consisting in dark incantations by the gore of murdered captives—were solemnly performed by public edict on the Capitol. It was in vain that the Christian senators exclaimed against this horrible impiety; their voices were drowned in enthusiastic acclamations for the restoration of pagan rites, and in execrations and blasphemies of Christ. It is narrated by Sozomen, that the most reflecting of the Romans looked upon the calamities of the city as a just judgment on this incorrigible attachment to idolatry.\*

Notwithstanding these rites of propitiation, the lightnings of Jupiter Tonans were not hurled upon the Gothic tents, to which another embassy soon proceeded, with bearing much more suppliant than the first. The lowest price of mercy was fixed by the

\* Vid. Socrat. l. ix. c. 6; Zosim. l. v. c. 40, 41. Gibbon avails himself of a malignant innuendo of this latter (pagan) writer, in order to disparage Pope Innocent, who filled the chair of St. Peter at that time. "Zosimus," he says, "does not mention the name of Innocent: and Tillemont (Mem. Eccl. tom. x. p. 645) is determined not to believe that a pope could be guilty of such impious condescension."—*Hist. of Decl. and Fall*, ch. xxxi. p. 116, vol. iv.

barbarian at 5,000lbs. of gold, 30,000lbs. of silver, 4,000 robes of silk, 3,000 pieces of fine scarlet cloth, 3,000lbs. of pepper, a favourite ingredient of the most exquisite Roman cookery. The best sort was commonly fifteen denarii, or ten shillings, the pound.

Enriched by the contributions of the capital, the Goths retired to winter in the fair and fruitful regions of Tuscany; but before they broke off the siege, their standard became the refuge of 40,000 barbarian slaves, who had broken their chains, and speedily returned to revenge the injuries and disgraces they had endured in cruel servitude.\*

After many fruitless negotiations, touching the ratification by the Emperor Honorius of the terms guaranteed to Alaric by the senate, the Goth proclaimed his determination to visit Rome again. The eternal city was filled with consternation. Attalus, (who afterwards figured as Roman emperor,) the patricians, Cecilianus, and Maximian, were sent to implore the emperor's assent to the demands upon which the safety of the queen of cities depended. It was on this occasion that Pope Innocent was withdrawn, as Orosius says, like another Lot, from the doomed city: he accompanied the ambassadors to Ravenna, and was spared the misery of witnessing the horrors that ensued soon after.†

The result of the second investment of the city was, that the Romans, senate and people, throwing off allegiance to the son of Theodosius, appointed, at the dictation of Alaric, an emperor of their own, who was to ratify the conditions rejected by Honorius. This revolution was entirely the work of the pagan faction, who became elated beyond measure at the prospect of seeing the ancient worship again triumphant. Tertullus, a zealot in the cause, was named consul by Attalus, who had been himself educated a pagan,‡ and all the Gentile superstitions, prescribed by

\* Gib. Hist. of Decl. and Fall, ch. xxxi. p. 118, vol. iv.

† A. D. 409.

‡ Gib. ubi supra, p. 126.

the rubric of the Capitol, were scrupulously practised at his inauguration. In his opening address to the senate, he congratulated the conscript fathers upon the progress already made, and assured them, what had been so auspiciously commenced was only an earnest of the speedy and complete accomplishment of their long cherished hopes.\* The consul was if possible outstripped in fervour by the new prætorian prefect, Lampridius. Zosimus, the pagan historian, adds, that these appointments were received with acclamations by the citizens, and that the Anicii, firmly attached to Christianity, stood alone in their discontent and their murmurs amidst the universal exultation.†

The reward of this new impiety was not long deferred. On hearing of the revolution in Rome, the governor of Africa immediately laid an embargo on all ships bound for Ostia with corn, and the consequence was another famine, so dire that, after everything else was consumed, the Romans began to devour each other's flesh.‡ But, nevertheless, the sports went on, and were as attractive as in the meridian of prosperity. The wild gaze of famishing myriads still pursued the rival colours in the circus races, with frenzied ecstasy; but, when Attalus and his pagan officers of state appeared in the imperial tribune to enjoy the spectacle, he was saluted not with salves, or with vows for a protracted and happy reign, but with a hideous clamour to have "a price put on human flesh!"§

Many were the Christians who viewed these dreadful forerunners of the worse calamities still impending as so many warnings from the Divine mercy, by which the stroke of justice was withheld, until the most ample opportunity should have been afforded, for the

\* Orosius, lib. vii. c. 42.

† Zosim. lib. vi. et Sozom. lib. v. ap. Bar. ad ann. 410, No. 4.

‡ Sozom. lib. ix. c. 8, et S. Hieron. ep. xvi. ad Princip.

§ "Pretium pone carni humanæ."—Zosim. lib. v. ap. Baron. an. 410, No. 7.



obdurate to repent, and for the escape of the faithful. We meet with the names of Paulina, Pamachius, Paula, Fabiola, and others of patrician rank, who took refuge, chiefly at Bethlehem, after exhausting their fortunes in relieving the public distress. In the little woody island of Igilium, (now called Giglio,) great numbers sought shelter; others fled to the forests and most inaccessible crags and fastnesses of the Apennines; but next to the East, the greatest number directed their flight towards the shores of Africa, where many fugitives of rank held ample patrimonies. Amongst these was Proba, the illustrious widow of Petronius, who had been prefect of the city, and ranked as the first subject of the empire. Her fortune was princely,—three of her sons had worn the consulship; but so great was this Christian lady's piety and fortitude, that she not only beheld the flames of her palaces with resignation, from the little bark that was wafting her to the sea, but could not contain herself for joy, at having the beautiful empress Læta, her own widowed child, and her granddaughter, the virgin Demetrias, by her side.\*

It is stated by Socrates, the ecclesiastical writer, that Alaric's object in causing Attalus to be invested with the purple, was that, in his person, the imperial dignity might be disgraced and exposed to derision; and that, with this view, he was, one day, paraded with all the pomp and majesty of a Roman emperor, and, the next, exhibited to be mocked in the habit and abject condition of a slave.† The first and most solemn of these scenes of mockery was made an entertainment for the Goths, just as they were on the point of marching against Rome, for the

\* "Eminus Igilii sylvosa cacumina miror :  
 Fraudare nefas laudis honore suæ  
 Hæc proprios nuper tutata est insula, saltus :  
 Sive loci ingenio, seu Domini genio.  
 Hæc multos lacerâ suscepit ab urbe fugatos."

*Rutil. in Itinerar. lib. i. 325.*

† Socrat. Hist. Eccl. lib. vii. c. 10.

last time. They were marshalled under arms in a great plain near Rimini, not far from where Cæsar crossed the Rubicon ; and when Attalus, (after being conducted with imperial state, attended by his great officers, Tertullus, the consul, the prætorian prefect, Lamprius, with a gorgeous retinue of guards and courtiers,) had been ignominiously stripped of the purple and the diadem, in full view of an immense concourse of both Romans and barbarians, the order to march was received with savage exultation, mingled with peals of laughter at the mock majesty and sudden downfall of the Roman emperor. Thenceforth, nothing but rapine and vengeance, so long deferred, were in their sanguinary thoughts: they rushed like hungry lions upon their prey. This would appear to have been the occasion on which the holy hermit threw himself in the way of the Gothic king, in a narrow defile of the Apennines. "Servant of heaven," cried Alaric, "seek not to turn me from my mission. It is not from choice, I lead my army against that devoted place; but some invisible power, that will not suffer me to halt a single day, urges me on by violence, continually, crying out to me without ceasing, 'Forward! march upon that city, upon Rome, and make it desolate!'"\*

"At the hour of midnight," says Gibbon, "the Salarian gate was silently opened, and the Romans were suddenly awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet." Thus was the mystical Babylon, like its prophetic type, the city of Belshazzar, surprised in the midst of its security. "It was by night," says St. Jerome, "that Moab fell: its wall was laid prostrate by night."† For although beleaguered by the barbarians, (with whom they were as if familiarized by the preceding sieges,) the Romans had such confidence in their lofty, rock-built walls, that, like the Babylonians when the Persians surrounded *their* city,

\* Socrat. Hist. Eccl. lib. vii. c. 10.

† "Nocte MOAB capta est, nocte cecidit murus ejus."—*S. Hieron. ad Princip., Op. tom. i. p. 121.*

the denizens of the eternal city revelled, and then retired to their beds, without even the slightest shadow of apprehension.\* Procopius says, the senators were fast asleep as the Goths were entering the gate.†

"The cruelties exercised on this occasion," says the Italian annalist, "one cannot relate without shedding tears." The city, constructed as it were of the spoils, and overflowing with the tributes of so many nations, was now at the mercy of the infuriated barbarians. They were lighted on their way by flaming palaces and temples, from the villa of Sallust—a perfect sanctuary and garden of Epicurus—on to the Suburra, the Forum, the Capitol; and above all, to the golden house of Nero. They were guided in the pursuit of plunder, and of the most guilty blood, by the forty thousand fugitives, who laboured during that night of horrors, with more assiduity than ever they had exerted under their taskmasters' stripes, to requite the offices they had received at Roman hands, and to wash out, in patrician gore, the hateful vestiges of their chains. The things, not to be uttered, which Rome had so often perpetrated during the sieges, and massacres, and burnings, of a thousand years, were now retaliated, rigorously, on herself. Her nobles were submitted to tortures the most cruel and ignominious, to wring from them their hidden treasures;‡ the plebeians were mowed down in such multitudes, that the survivors did not suffice to inter the slain. The Forum, the Circus, and the Coliseum,—the Capitol, the streets, the theatres, baths, and temples,—ran with blood; the palace halls and chambers were the scenes of unutterable outrage; the seven-hilled city was in flames; the trophies and monuments, in which the lords of the earth most prided themselves, were the chief objects of Gothic rage;§ and it was said by eye-witnesses of these terrors, that the trophies, temples,

\* Daniel, ch. v.

† De Bel. Vandal. lib. ii. c. 2.

‡ Socrat. ubi supra.

§ "Multa insignia monumenta spectatu dignissima."—*Ibid.*



and other public edifices, that defied by their solidity the brands of the barbarians, were struck with thunderbolts from heaven.\*

But the Almighty, in punishing with chastisement so terrible the obstinate remains of paganism in Rome, caused his mercy to shine forth at the same time with his justice. It was proclaimed by the king of the Goths, that he warred not against St. Peter: he ordered the churches, and places consecrated to Christian purposes, to be respected; appointed the two great basilicas of the apostles as inviolable sanctuaries of refuge; and so strictly was this order observed, that the barbarians not only halted in the career of slaughter on arriving at these hallowed precincts, but many of them conducted thither such as had moved them to pity, that under the protection of the apostles, they might be saved from the rage of others, who might not be found equally compassionate.†

“It happened,” says Orosius, “as the barbarians were rushing in every direction through the city in quest of plunder, that a sacred virgin, who had grown old in the divine service to which she had consecrated her entire being, was discovered in her convent by a Gothic chief, who demanded all the gold and silver in her possession. She replied with Christian composure, that the treasures in her keeping were, indeed, immense; but while the Goth stood in admiration and astonishment, gazing at the splendid hoard of massy gold and silver vessels which she revealed, the virgin of Christ observed, ‘Before you are the sacred vessels used in the divine mysteries, at the altar of St. Peter the apostle; presume to touch them if you be so minded; but mark! the consequences of your sacrilege shall be upon your own head: as for me, too feeble to defend them, I shall not vainly attempt resistance.’”

“Struck with reverence and religious awe, and not a little moved by the holy enthusiasm of the nun, the chief, without attempting to lay his hand upon the

\* Oros. lib. ii. c. 19.

† S. August. de Civit. Dei, l. ii. c. 1—7.

sacred treasure, sent intelligence of what had happened to King Alaric. An instant and peremptory order was returned, to have all the vessels promptly conveyed, just as they were, to the basilica of the apostle; and to guard and protect the nun and all the other Christians, who should chance to join in the procession.

"The convent was situated on the Cælian mount, (probably near the Lateran,) so that the entire city was to be traversed, an immense distance, in order to reach St. Peter's. It was then, that an astounding spectacle presented itself to the eyes of all. Through the greatest thoroughfares of the city, and amidst all the horrors of that night, a solemn train is seen advancing, with the same order and measured step as if it moved, not through scenes of slaughter, violence, and conflagration, but through hallowed aisles, on some joyous festival. A martial retinue of the Goths marched as a guard of honour, to adorn the triumph with their glittering arms, and to defend their devout companions, who bore the sacred vessels of massy gold and silver aloft upon their heads. The voices of the barbarians are united with those of the Romans to swell the hymns of Christian praise; and these sounds are heard, like the trumpet of salvation, re-echoing far and wide through the destruction of the city. The Christians start in their hiding places, as they recognise the celestial canticles, and crowd from every direction to follow the vessels of St. Peter. Even multitudes of pagans, joining loudly in the hymn of Christ, take part in the procession; and thus escape under the shadow of the sacred name, that they may live to assail it with greater violence than ever.\* Joined by the fugitives from every side, the pageant seems interminable; and, in proportion as it is lengthened by new accessions,

\* This is in allusion to the vehement outcry raised against Christianity by the pagans, after the departure of the Goths. They upbraided the Christian religion as the origin of all the calamities of the Roman world: and, it was in refutation of this insane fanaticism, that St. Augustine wrote his great work, on the city of God; and Orosius his history.

the barbarians vie with each other for the privilege of marching as guards on either side of it, armed with their battle-axes and naked swords."

Thus it was that Heaven displayed its power to conduct the objects of its solicitude, through the very midst of despair and death, to a harbour of safety; the city was, as it were, sifted of the Christians that still remained in it, by means of this procession. In the very crisis of ruin, they were separated and saved from the common havoc, as if by the intervention of angels. But the most astounding feature of the miracle was the sudden transiion of the Goths from fury to mildness. They abandoned the pursuit of plunder, and wielded their reeking weapons to protect the lives and treasures of their vanquished enemies.

The sack continued, according to Orosius, for three, according to Count Marcellinus, for six days. Both accounts are consistent. When the immensity of the Gothic forces is considered, and how enormous was the plunder to be partitioned and loaded in the trains of waggons, that moved, interspersed with droves of captives, along the Appian way, as if they would never cease, it may be well supposed, that the rear-guard did not issue from the gates for three days after Alaric had sounded a retreat.\*

"In the pillage of Rome," says Gibbon, "a just preference was given to gold and jewels, which contain the greatest value in the smallest compass and weight; but after these portable riches had been removed by the more diligent robbers, the palaces of Rome were rudely stripped of their splendid and costly furniture. The sideboards of massy plate, and the variegated wardrobes of silk and purple, were irregularly piled in the waggons that always followed the march of a Gothic army. The most exquisite works of art were roughly handled, or wantonly destroyed: many a statue was melted for sake of the precious materials: and many a vase, in the division of the

\* Vid. Oros. lib. ii. c. 19; Marcel. Con in Chron. apud Sismondi; et Murat. ad ann. 409.



spoil, was shivered into fragments by the stroke of a battle-axe. The acquisition of riches served only to stimulate the avarice of the rapacious barbarians, who proceeded, by threats, by blows, and by tortures, to force from their prisoners the confession of hidden treasures."

From the palaces and temples of the city, the ministers of rapine and conflagration spread themselves over the voluptuous garden of Italy. The beauteous regions of Campania were laid waste with fire and sword. The towns, from Baiæ and Capua, to Tarentum and Rhegium, were sacked.\* Those villas, which formed the chief delight of the Roman nobility in their day of pride, were stripped of their exquisite furniture, and, after having been made the scenes of outrage and insult for the sons and daughters of their once lordly owners, were laid in ruins. Nor was the brand of vengeance to be extinguished, even in the grave of Alaric: drenched though it was by the Roman gore of the captives whom they forced to dig it deep in a river's bed, and though filled with the spoils and proudest trophies of Rome.† The city was doomed to another visit, when Adolphus, the successor of Alaric, led back the Goths from plundering Campania; and among his captives was Galla Placidia, a princess, not less renowned for her beauty than for her rank, and the singular vicissitudes of her life. She soon after became the bride of the Gothic conqueror. The nuptial gift, which, according to the custom of this nation, was offered to Placidia by her Gothic lord, consisted of the rare and magnificent spoils of her fallen country. Fifty basins filled with pieces of gold, and fifty filled with jewels of inestimable value, were borne by fifty beautiful patrician youths in brilliant attire, and placed at the foot of the throne, where the captive bride sat adorned as a Roman empress; and that nothing might be wanting to the sports of fortune, the Roman emperor, Attalus, was appointed to lead

\* Vid. Murat. ann. 409.

† Id. ann. 410, et Gibbon, ubi supra.

the chorus of the hymeneal song, amidst the derisive applause of the barbarians.\*

We are informed by history, that the whole world was filled with wailing and consternation at the news that Rome was fallen, and had been burned and plundered; but it is to prophecy we are indebted for a most lively picture of the distress that prevailed. Those most immediately affected by the catastrophe, the merchants and traders who had been made rich by reason of her enormous extravagance and costliness, St. John introduces, like a chorus of the ancient tragedies, mourning and bewailing their misfortunes. "Alas! alas!" they cry, "that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls." Who, they cried, were to buy their merchandise any more: merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most precious wood, and of bronze, and iron, and marble: cinnamon, and perfumes, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and *souls of men*. And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying: "Alas! alas! that great city, wherein were made rich all who had ships in the sea by reason of her prices! for in one hour is she made desolate!"†

Such an event had been obscurely talked of and anticipated among the Christians, from the earliest age—from the publication of St. John's prophecy, and

\* The nuptial scene is described by Jornandes, the Gothic historian, de Bel. Gotic., c. xxxi. p. 654, 655. The time of Placidia's being led captive from Rome is collected from the chronicles of Idatius and of Marcellinus; also from Orosius, lib. vii. c. 40. The scene lies in the palace of Ingenuus, one of the most illustrious citizens of Narbon.

† A glance to what has been said in the second Book, will satisfy the reader of the coincidence between the list of imports given by the prophet and that collected from the Roman writers.

even from an earlier date, that of St. Peter's first epistle. But it belongs to that kind of anticipation excited by prophecy, not to detract from the impressiveness of events, but rather to enhance it; for, while such is the singular power of the inspired language to invest with mystery the futurity which it reveals, that the clearest predictions have ever come upon the world with all the effect of unforeseen occurrences, it also happens, that catastrophes in themselves the most awful are made to rise still higher in the sublimity of their terrors, by being represented in the light of Divine judgments. St. Jerome had entertained no doubt whatever about the import of the prophecies: he knew they applied to Rome; he had said, that the colossus was on its last legs, and he had been made aware of the progress of events, from the first investment of the city to the raising of the second, and even to the forming of the third, siege; yet he breaks out into exclamations of amaze, and is overwhelmed with grief, in listening to the unfortunate outcasts, swept from scenes of splendour and dissipation by that tempest, to beg for bread and raiment at his convent doors. "Who would have believed it," he exclaims, "that a city, I may say, constructed of trophies—that all-conquering Rome, the empress of the world, should lie crushed: that the cradle and home of so many nations should be changed, on a sudden, into one vast charnel house?" "How incredible," he continues, "that they who so lately wreathed their smiles, and glittered amidst scenes of adulation and splendour, should now be scattered, as miserable handmaids, all over the coasts of Africa, Egypt, and the East? Day after day, the sanctuaries of Bethlehem receive, as suppliants for food and shelter, patrician dames and noblemen of the proudest lineage, who erewhile abounded in the most lavish gifts of fortune. Unable to relieve distress that transcends all remedy, we endeavour, at least, to alleviate their affliction, by condoling with the sufferers, and by mingling our tears with theirs. So heartrending



is their distress, so great the multitude of the exiles who are crowding in continually, that every other pursuit and study, no matter how sacred, must, for a time at least, give way to efforts for their relief. For the present, it must be our only study to translate the sacred oracles, not into the vulgar tongue, but into daily acts of charity: to illustrate their meaning, not by dissertations, but by good works." "‘I was dumb,’" he says in another place, quoting the psalmist, "‘and was humbled, and kept silence from good things,’ when the fatal tidings reached me, after so many agonizing nights and days of uncertainty, that the most brilliant ornament of all the earth was at last extinguished; and after that the Roman empire was decollated, if I may so speak, and left a mere headless trunk; ‘my sorrow was redoubled, my heart grew hot within me, and my meditation became turned into flame.’ In the bitterness of grief, I remembered the saying: ‘Musica in luctu importuna narratio.’"\*

Not less intense or active in its generous sacrifices, was the compassion of the pious Proba. She not only expended all the wealth in gold and jewels she was possessed of, besides her immense income, but, to succour the forlorn multitudes cast on the African coasts by the great catastrophe, she even sold and mortgaged her estates.† And here, again, was displayed the celestial prescience, that so long beforehand, not only prepared a place of refuge for those objects of its complacency whom it had as if scared away from destruction, but also provided and disposed those holy anchorets and devoted souls who were to receive them, and be to them in all things like succouring angels in the wilderness.

\* Prolog. in Ezech.

† Tillem. Mem. Eccl. tom. xiii. p. 630, et seq.; et S. Hier. ad Demetr. tom. i. p. 62, et seq.

## CHAPTER VII.

“Observe with how much indifference Cæsar relates, in the Commentaries on the Gallic war, that he put to death the whole senate of the Veneti who had yielded to his mercy; that he laboured to extirpate the whole nation of the Eburones; that forty thousand persons were massacred at Bourges by the *just* revenge of his soldiers, who spared neither age nor sex. The Romans, who so coolly and so concisely mention the acts of *justice* exercised by the legions, reserve their compassion, and their eloquence, for their own sufferings, when the provinces were invaded and desolated by the barbarians.”—*Gibbon, Hist. of Decl. and Fall*, ch. xxvi.

BUT Rome was not to be destroyed in a day. True, it never recovered this stroke; nor was there left any room to hope that it ever could. The entire West, on which it depended, not only for its grandeur, but for its existence—Illyricum, Spain, Britain, and the Gauls, became involved in ruin at the same time; for the Suevi, the Alans, the Vandals, the Burgundians, Franks, Silingi, and other savage hordes, took up their abode permanently in the beautiful countries they had invaded with fire and sword, while the Goths were similarly engaged in Italy; and Africa, on which it depended for daily sustenance, was spared but for a few years. The mystery that had invested this city, in causing it to be regarded by the nations as something divine, as something invincible—as a goddess in fact, and an eternal city: even the magic influence produced on the world by the enormous wealth of its inhabitants, by its trophies, its architectural wonders, and the awful shadow of its renown—these were either entirely at an end, or impaired and shaken beyond remedy. But although the wound inflicted by the Gothic king was mortal, so mighty was Rome, even in her last agonies, that it required the force, the brutal fury, of the most ruthless bar-

barians to be exerted, in havoc, conflagration, and every species of violence, assisted for upwards of a century by famine, pestilence, inundations, hurricanes, and earthquakes, before she was left prostrate, like an enormous skeleton without life, to be infested and preyed upon by wild beasts.

Nothing can give a stronger or more correct idea of the extent to which even the edifices of Rome had suffered, than what we learn from the historians, Olympiodorus and Philostorgius.\* They tell us that the Romans were encouraged in every way by the Emperor Honorius (residing all this time at Ravenna) "*to rebuild their city*;" and the chronicles of Prosper commends the prefect, Heraclian, for his strenuous exertions "*in Romæ urbis reparationem.*" Forlorn, indeed, and calculated to depress the most buoyant spirit, must have been the aspect of that city, soiled by the scarcely extinguished flames, and stripped by barbarian rapacity of all its splendour. Who shall be surprised, if in returning from the woods and rocky caves of the sea-girt Igilium, and the mountains round Tusculum and Alba, we hear the sounds of wailing and lamentation raised in its streets and palaces, strewed as they still are with the vestiges of slaughter? But it is not to mourn over tombs, or to supplicate round altars, but to hasten to their beloved circus, that the fugitives pour back, like the tide to a strand deformed with wrecks. There they vociferate, that all they require are horse-races and daily rations, as of old, to indemnify them for the visit of the Goths. The crowds that so lately had fled before the swords of the barbarians, were soon recalled by the hopes of plenty and pleasure. The queen of the seven hills replaced her crown of laurel, and haughtily readjusted it, as if it had been only slightly ruffled by the storms of war.† She listened with a fonder infatuation than

\* Olym. ap. Phot. p. 188; Philost. l. xii. c. 5.

† See Gibbon, ch. xxx. p. 150, quoting from Rutilius: "*Erige crinales lauros, seniumque sacрати virticis in virides Roma recinge coronas,*" &c.



ever to the prophecies of revenge, of victory, and of eternal duration, but she suffered no thoughts of conversion and repentance to come near her; and when, after a respite of forty-three years, the "scourge of God" is again suspended over Rome, we find congregated in her circus, a pagan faction impious as that which figured in the days of Radogast, and as ungrateful for their miraculous preservation through the influence of Christianity.

In the spring time of the year 452, there came rushing through the gorges of the Julian Alps, a torrent of invaders, the most hideous and merciless that even hapless Italy ever beheld. These were the nation of the Huns. The very sight of them had, on their first appearance in Europe, struck terror into the Goths themselves, from whose historian, Jornandes, we have the following description of their aspect:—"The livid colour of their skin," he says, "had in it something shocking to the sight; theirs was not a face, but a deformed mass of flesh, provided, instead of eyes, with two black and sinister spots. Their cruelty wreaked itself even upon their own new-born offspring, whose cheeks they lacerated with iron before they had tasted their mother's milk; and from this cause no down graced their chin in youth, no beard gave dignity to their old age." The portraiture of their personal appearance left us by Ammianus is still more revolting; indeed some portions of it are not to be thought of, much less translated. "They looked not like men," he says, "but like wild beasts standing on two legs, as if in mockery of the human species." Their manners and disposition were as detestable as their physiognomy. At the same time that they spurned even the prime conveniences of life, such as even the shelter of a hut thatched with reeds, a change of garments, or the most simple mode of cooking what they eat, they were devoured by a thirst for gold which they procured through blood, conflagration, and ruin, and squandered in gambling; a practice to which they were abandoned with all the

vehemence of passion. But a ferocious delight in cruel massacre, and in changing the most populous and happy scenes of civilized life into a resemblance of their native deserts, was the characteristic of their race. In short, so inhuman were they in every respect, that the other barbarians, though brutalized and ferocious in the extreme, regarded them as a race of fiends disguised under a counterfeit similitude of man. Such were the invaders now hastening to complete, for the seven-hilled city, what had been left unfinished by the Goths. Their king, Attila, who had acquired for himself the title of "The scourge of God," was pursued by no less than 500,000 of these demons in human form; and it was his boast, that wherever his horse once trod, the grass never grew again. Not only did the human race vanish before this minister of destruction, but every monument and vestige of civilized existence disappeared as his legions swept over them; so that the steed might career as uninterruptedly, across the sites of once famous cities, as over a desert. Already was the north of Italy dispeopled, either by the flight, or slaughter, or captivity, of its inhabitants: the noble city of Aquileia was so obliterated, as that the place where it had stood could be hardly discerned by the next generation: Altinum, Concordia, and Padua, with other towns, had been reduced to heaps of stones and ashes; but to the astonishment of mankind, and above all of the Romans, who had not dared to hope it, at the head of his 500,000 Huns, this dreadful king is suddenly checked, made to halt, and turn back to the wilderness, at a moment, when not even a single cohort, or manipule of troops, stood between him and Rome, the grand object of his ambition. To what purpose is it to deny that the barbarian was menaced, as was said, by the princes of the apostles, in order to get rid of a miracle? whereas the miracle is increased an hundred-fold in sublimity, by supposing that the king of the Huns was compelled or persuaded to relinquish his prey, already within his grasp, and

turned back into the wilderness, amidst the rage and execrations of savage myriads—cheated of so much blood and rapine; all at the instance or through reverence of a feeble, unarmed, old man! Yet in all history, there is no fact better attested than the sudden, unhopèd-for, retreat of Attila, after he was met by Pope Leo the Great. In his anxiety to remove every appearance of superhuman intervention, on this as on all other occasions, the historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire unwittingly exhibits the divine influence of Christianity in the strongest light, by assigning this most astonishing event to “*the veneration of Attila*” (a merciless, heathen, savage,) “*for the spiritual father of the Christians.*”\*

Attila was a heathen, or rather he was an atheist; for neither temple, nor shrine of any description, was to be seen amongst the Huns; but a naked sword fixed in the ground represented to them the genius of murderous havoc, the only object of their piety.† Their mode of worship was suitable to their god. They cut off the shoulder and arm of each hundredth captive, and casting them into the air, drew omens and presages from the manner of their falling on the pile of blazing faggots.‡ In his march from the great wall of China to the Rhine, he had left nothing behind him but a solitude—strewn with the skeletons of nations and cities; “the words most expressive of total extirpation and erasure,” says Gibbon, “are applied to the calamities inflicted by him on seventy cities of the east.” “Invading, and cutting out, or chiselling off, as if like a sculptor, not only the cities, but the castles and hamlets,” says Count Marcellinus, “he made bare, or scraped as if with a harrow, or some rough instrument for levelling and giving a polished

\* Ch. xxxv. p. 314, vol. iv.

† “Nec templum apud eos visitur, aut delubrum, ne tugurium quidem culmo tectum cerni usquam potest: sed *gladius* barbarico ritù humi figitur rudus, eumque ut Martem regionem quas circumcircant præsulem verecundiùs colunt.”—*Amm. Marcel.* xxxi. 2.

‡ Herodot. lib. iv. c. 62, ap. Gib. ch. xxxiv. p. 249, note K.



uniformity of surface, the greatest part of Europe." Forced and exaggerated as these expressions may seem to be, they but very feebly indicate the idea of total abrasure and destruction given by the text,—  
 "Pene totam Europam, invasis, excisisque civitatibus, atque castellis, *conrasit*."\*

With an enormous head, broad high shoulders, a body square built, the person of Attila displayed the power of a giant combined with a dwarf's deformity: his nose was flat; his eyes, deep-seated and small, darted looks of ferocity from his visage, disgusting at the same time that it was terrible, and not graced by even the manly appearance of a beard; he rolled his eyes continually to enjoy the terror which he inspired; and from his entire bearing, as he sat upon the savage and mighty animal that delighted like himself in war, it was manifestly his delight, as he deemed it to be his destiny, to trample on the prostrate bodies of the human race. "Having devastated all around him after he had entered Italy," says Cassiodorus, "when he was ready to rush down upon Rome too, Leo, the great pope, rendered him so mild that, in an instant, (*illicò*,) promising a most firm peace, he retired with his Huns beyond the Danube."†

But instead of being grateful to Christ, by whose vicar they were delivered from a scourge that would not have left of Rome one single stone upon another, the majority of the Romans, plebeians, and patricians, persisted in regarding this and every other blessing still left to them, as coming from the gods of the Capitol; while Christianity was incessantly upbraided as having caused the downfall of Rome, and all the miseries of the empire. It was to refute this impious impeachment with which the whole world was made to ring again by the pagan faction, after Alaric had burned and plundered Rome, that the great work, "*De Civitate Dei*," or "*Of the City of God*," was written by St. Augustine; and in order still more fully to vindicate

\* Marcel. in Chron.

† Jornandes, (the Gothic historian,) c. xxxv. p. 661.

the ways of Providence, he persuaded the learned Spanish priest, Orosius, to compose another work, in the form of a universal history, to show the pagans that great disasters were not altogether confined to the times of Christ's kingdom. But notwithstanding all this, we find the venerable Leo, on the anniversary day of their miraculous deliverance from Attila, complaining bitterly of the ingratitude and superstitious folly of the Romans. In the discourse, delivered by him in St. Peter's, during the festival of thanksgiving, he says :—

“ It covers me with confusion to have to make the statement ; but it must not be dissembled here, that more is said to be due in this matter to the demons of paganism than to the apostles of our Lord ; and that while the insane exhibitions of the circus, to-day, attract overflowing multitudes, (as if in honour of the idols,) but few have gathered round these tombs of the martyrs, to thank Heaven for having preserved us through their intervention. Romans, by whom was this city reclaimed to salvation ? who freed it from captivity ? who saved it from slaughter ? was it by circensian spectacles these blessings were obtained, rather than by the labours and solicitude of the apostles ? By whose intercession, I pray you, were the scourges deserved by our sins turned aside, and we, who were justly doomed to ire, preserved by mercy ? Oh, may your souls, most beloved children, be touched by that moving expostulation of the Saviour, relative to the ingratitude of the lepers who were so indebted to his mercy. ‘ Were not ten made clean,’ he said, ‘ and where are the nine ? is but this one found to return and give glory to God ? ’ That to you also, dearly beloved, this rebuke may not be applied, return to the Lord, recognising with thanksgiving the wonderful things (*mirabilia*) which he has vouchsafed to effect in our behalf. Instead of following the example of those impious men, who assign our deliverance from the Hun, to the influence of the stars, assigning it to the unspeakable mercy of the omnipo-

tent God who deigned to assuage the hearts of the infuriated barbarians, let your memories revert to this signal mark of the Divine favour with all the vigour of faith. May the parental lenity we have experienced have the effect of operating our amendment, and may St. Peter and all the saints, who in many tribulations stood beside us, vouchsafe to help our supplications for you before the mercy seat of God, through Christ our Lord. Amen.”\*

In the opening of his sermon, the Pontiff dwelt on the great danger of not being grateful to God for his benefits, contrite under his correcting hand, and ready to acknowledge with festive joy the remission of his chastisements. He then quoted the saying of the Almighty by the mouth of his prophet: “In vain have I struck your children, they have not received correction;” giving utterance to his fears at the same time, lest the Romans, by copying the perverseness of the Jews, should not be exempted from similar punishments. Nor was it long till events but too terribly demonstrated how well-founded these prophetic apprehensions were. In less than two years after, a barbarian scarcely less terrible and ruthless than Attila, is again under the walls of Rome.

This was the king of the Vandals, to whom has been assigned an equal rank with Alaric and Attila, in the destruction of the Roman empire. Genseric is described, by the Goth Jornandes, to have been of middle stature, with a halt in one leg, broken by his horse having fallen on it, when slain under him in battle. He seldom spoke, lest an incautious hint

\* Serm. in Octava Apostol. There is, in the general tone and allusions of this discourse, (ap Baron. ad ann. 452, No. 61) a something that coincides admirably with what we read in the public monuments of the Roman church, to the effect, that, it was by an apparition of St. Peter, (according to another copy, of St. Peter and St. Paul,) that Attila was awed into the concession of what the Pope demanded of him:—“Qui interrogatus a suis, cur præter consuetudinem inflexus esset? Respondit—se vidisse, Leone loquente, astantem alium quemdam habitu sacerdotali decorum, quid divinum præseferentem, minantemque mortem nisi Papæ jussu capesseret.”



might betray some of the dark plottings of his breast. The dissolute effeminacy of the abandoned race, whom he deemed it his mission to exterminate, he regarded with scorn, but his passion of anger amounted to fury. His rage for conquest and rapine was insatiable: the resources of his genius were equal to enterprises the most desperate; and he had no scruple, or feeling of pity, to interfere with or impede him in executing them. His tact in discerning and winning whatever alliances could best serve his views was consummate, and equal to his ability in this respect, was his art of scattering the seeds of contention and deadly feuds among his enemies.\*

Sailing from the southern shores of Spain, (Vandalusia,) he made his descent upon Africa in the spring of the year 420. The barbarities which ensued, and the pitiable condition to which that most lovely and flourishing province was reduced, have been already noticed.† “The Vandals,” says Gibbon, “seldom gave quarter: the deaths of their countrymen were expiated by the ruin of the cities under whose walls they had fallen; and they employed every species of indignity and torture, without distinction of age, sex, or rank, to force from the captives a discovery of their hidden wealth.”‡ “After he had possessed himself of the entire country from Tangier to Tripoli, he commenced a new career—ravaging all the shores of the Mediterranean, as a mighty and ruthless corsair. It was when about to sail from the port of Carthage, on a cruise of this kind, that the pilot asked him to what coast he was to steer? ‘Leave the direction to the winds,’ replied Genseric, ‘they will guide us to that one with which God is angry.’”§

\* “Gizericus staturâ mediocris et equi casû claudicans, animo profundus, sermone rarus, luxuriæ contemptor, irâ turbidus, habendi cupidus, ad sollicitandas gentes providentissimus, semina contentionum jacere, odia miscere paratus.”—*Jornand. de Bel. Getic.* cxxxiii. p. 657.

† See vol. i. book iii. ch. ii. of this work.

‡ Ch. xxxiii. p. 232, vol. iv.

§ *Δηλονότι ἐφ’ οἷς ὁ θεὸς ᾤργισται.*—*Procop. de Bel. Vand.* lib. i. c. 8.

Such was the barbarian whom the Romans now beheld from their walls, advancing from the seashore of Ostia, at the head of two nations of Vandals and Moors, who vied with each other in their furious haste to plunder, massacre, and consume by fire whatever had escaped the Goths. "Instead of a sally of the Roman youth," says Gibbon, "there issued from the gates an unarmed and venerable procession of the bishop at the head of his clergy. The fearless spirit of Leo, his authority and eloquence, again mitigated the fierceness of a barbarian conqueror; the king of the Vandals promised to spare the unresisting multitude, to protect the buildings from fire, and to exempt the captives from torture." It should be added, on the authority of Anastasius the librarian, that the pope obtained for the three great basilicas of the Lateran, St. Peter's, and St. Paul's, the same privileges the Goths had granted of their own accord.\* "The mediation of Leo," continued Gibbon, "was glorious to himself, and in some degree beneficial to his country; but Rome and its inhabitants were delivered to the licentiousness of the Vandals and the Moors, whose blind passions revenged the injuries of Carthage."†

In the forty-five years that had elapsed since the Gothic invasion, the pomp and luxury of the city had been in some measure restored. But the corsairs were resolved that nothing worth burthening their ships with should escape them. They also took more time to their work, and had better facilities of conveyance than the Goths, whose sack was too hurried and circumscribed as to time, to admit of the same accuracy of detail. The ornaments of the golden house of Nero on the Palatine, the magnificent furniture, wardrobes, and sideboards of massy plate, were naturally the first fruits of rapine. The gold and silver, it is said, amounted to several thousand talents. But even the brass and copper were laboriously re-

\* Lib. Pontif. in vit. St. Leon. Mag. See also St. Prosp. in Chr. Hist. Miscel.

† Ubi supra.

moved. The capitoline temples were stripped of their gilded roofs of bronze. Among the other spoils, the idols of Jupiter, Minerva, Juno, and the other tutelary deities, which, with their regalia and chief ornaments, had till then remained unmolested, were torn from their shrines ; but the ship that was burdened with them was the only one of the entire fleet that did not reach the harbour of Carthage in safety. It was buried like a millstone in the sea.\* The spoils of the Jewish temple brought to Rome by Titus were carried away ; but they were recovered in the next century by Belisarius, and by the Emperor Justinian sent back to Jerusalem.† Thousands of all sexes were carried into captivity by the Vandals, and their distress was aggravated by the unfeeling barbarity, with which, in the division of the booty, the wives were torn from their husbands, and the children from their parents. The charity of Deogratias, bishop of Carthage, was their only consolation and support. He did not hesitate to sell the gold and silver plate of his church, to purchase the freedom of some, to alleviate the slavery of others, and to assist the wants and infirmities of a captive multitude, whose health was impaired by having been so densely crowded during the summer solstice in the holds of narrow vessels, and otherwise cruelly treated. By order of the holy bishop, two spacious churches were converted into hospitals ; the sick were distributed in convenient beds, and supplied with food and medicines with the tenderest care. The aged prelate himself repeatedly visited them by night as well as by day : regardless alike of his own infirmities and of the brutal insults and ill-usage he met with at the hands of the Vandals, whose cruelty as barbarians was rendered more deadly by their bigotry against the catholics. It is thus we meet with the successors of the apostles faithfully imitating, mid the disasters of a falling empire, the pattern of heroism and charity left them by St. Paul, in his conduct during the terrors of shipwreck.

\* Gibbon, vol. iv. p. 329.

† Vid. Baron. ad ann. 455.



Even twelve years later,\* the remnant of the pagan faction is again called into activity on the accession of Anthemius. His singular friendship for the philosopher Severus, whom he promoted to the consulship, was ascribed to a secret project of reviving the ancient worship of the gods. These idols were crumbling into dust; yet the vestiges of gentile superstition were not absolutely obliterated. Notwithstanding the zealous and persevering efforts of the popes, the festival of the Lupercalia was celebrated under the auspices of the new emperor,† who seems to have been enthusiastically sustained by the majority of the senate and the people in the civil war that speedily ensued, and in which, to use the words of Pope Gelasius, the unfortunate city was literally subverted.‡

The old, or pagan city, was held by Anthemius, while Olybrius, a nobleman of the Anician family, extended his posts from the Annio to the Milvian bridge, and was already in possession of what may be called the Christian town, that had grown up around St. Peter's, and along the narrow margin between the Janiculum and the river. Olybrius had encouragement from the Greek emperor, and the formidable support of Ricimer, chief of the Suevi, who had long created emperors for Rome, and unmade them at his pleasure; but the body of the senate and people firmly adhered to the cause of his rival; and the more effectual support of an army of Goths enabled him to prolong his reign, and the public distress, by a resistance of three months, amidst the horrors of famine and pestilence. At length Ricimer made a furious assault on the bridge of Hadrian, or St. Angelo. The narrow pass was as furiously defended, till Gelimer, the leader of the Goths, was slain: but then, seizing

\* A. D. 467.

† See Gibbon, ch. xxxvi. p. 360—362. vol. iv.

‡ "Nuper Anthemii et Ricimeris civili furore (Roma) subversa est."—*Gelas. in Epis. ad Andromach. apud Baron. ad ann. 496. No. 42.* "Sigonius and Muratori," says Gibbon, (*ibid.* p. 375,) "have illustrated this dark and bloody transaction."

the panic, the Suevi broke through every barrier, and rushed over heaps of carnage into the very heart of the town. "The soldiers," says Gibbon, "who united the rage of factious citizens with the savage manners of barbarians, were indulged without control, in the license of rapine and murder; the crowd of slaves and plebeians, who were unconcerned in the event, could only gain by indiscriminate pillage. The face of the city exhibited the contrast of stern cruelty and dissolute intemperance."\* And thus it was, that after having broken down the frontiers of her empire, annihilated her legions, made a wilderness of her beauteous provinces, stripped the city herself of all her lustre, and left her a forlorn outcast, where she had so long proudly sat as queen, the barbarians have assembled as it were to tear and hew out her very vitals: not only to "make her indeed miserable and naked," but to crush, and trample on her heart.

"In the calamitous period of twenty-one years,† which embraces the last convulsive struggles of the western empire, one man," says Sismondi, "had signalized himself above all those ephemeral emperors whom he created or dethroned at his will, without having it in his power to occupy his place. This was the patrician Ricimer, a Swabian, or Suevus, by birth, and son of the daughter of Wallia, king of the Visigoths, who had succeeded to Astolfus, who had wedded the empress Placidia. A popular sentiment, which it is surprising to discover in a country where there could not be said to be a people, rose in opposition to this barbarian, when he would have assumed the purple; though the men he nominated to wear it were sure to be elected. The haughty Swabian,

\* *Ubi supra*, p. 376. The concluding sentence will be recognised by the reader as a portion of the description of what occurred in the civil wars after the death of Nero, and which has been given at length in the third chapter of the third book of this work. Gibbon, in referring to the coincidence, observes, that the revolutions of ages may bring round the same calamities; but ages may revolve without producing a writer to describe them.

† A. D. 455, to A. D. 476.

disdaining to obey those whom he considered as his own creatures, accomplished their downfall before they were well seated on the throne. He died the 20th of August, 472. At this period, the provinces of the west acknowledged no other power than that of the barbarian troops, who took the name of Confederates: these men governed Italy. Two of their chiefs, who came in the train of the king of the Huns, next contended for the empire.

Orestes, a patrician of Pannonian extraction, who had long served Attila as secretary and ambassador, placed upon the throne his own son, ROMULUS AUGUSTUS, who in mockery was called AUGUSTULUS; while Odoacer, the son of Edecon, another minister of Attila, excited the Confederates to revolt against the chief they had just elected. Odoacer promised his Confederates a third part of the soil of Italy: caused Orestes to be put to death; and obliged his son Augustus to resign the empty title into the hands of the senate and Roman people. They, in their turn, by a unanimous decree abjured all their ancient claims to the empire of the world.

"As soon as the Romans," says the historian so often quoted, "began to breathe from the toils of the Punic war, they were attracted by the beauties and pleasures of Campania; and the country house of the elder Scipio, at Liternum, exhibited a lasting model of rustic simplicity. The delicious shores of Naples were crowded with villas; and Sylla applauded the masterly skill of his rival, Marius, who had seated himself on the lofty promontory of Misenum, that commands on every side the sea and land, as far as the boundaries of the horizon. The villa of Marius, was purchased within a few years by Lucullus, and the price had increased from two thousand five hundred to more than fourscore thousand pounds sterling: that is, from seven myriads and a half, to two hundred and fifty myriads of drachmæ. It was adorned by the new proprietor with Grecian arts and Asiatic treasures; and the houses and gardens of



Lucullus obtained a distinguished place in the list of imperial palaces. When the Vandals became formidable to the sea coast, the Lucullan villa gradually assumed the strength and appellation of a strong castle." Such was the scene, where closed the memorable dynasties of Romulus and Augustus. The last of their successors carried with him, their names so renowned, to this fortress destined to be his perpetual prison and his grave.

Not many years after, (only twenty,) the fortress villa was converted into a church and monastery of St. Severinus ; and thus did the shrine of an humble disciple of the Crucified, whose ambition had ever been to fly from earthly celebrity, become established and venerated in the midst of Cimbric and Parthian trophies ; and where the diadem and the sceptre of the Cæsars lay broken upon the captive's unrespected and forgotten tomb, the matin and the vesper bell was heard by the passing mariner and the pilgrim, inviting, from all those ancient sojourns of pleasure, to hymns and psalmody, in praise of the God, who is " wonderful in his saints."

## CHAPTER VIII.

"The frequent examples of ruin and desolation tempted the Romans not to spare the remains of a patrimony, which might every hour become the prey of the rapacious Goths. And the mad prodigality which prevails in the confusion of a shipwreck, may serve to explain the progress of luxury amidst the misfortunes and terrors of a sinking nation."—*Gibbon, Hist. of Dec. and Fall*, vol. iii. p. 462.

"Je crois voir un ancien palais, qui se soutien encore, par sa masse et par la stabilité de sa structure, mais qu'on ne repare plus, et que des mains étrangères demolissent peu à peu, et détruisent à la longue, pour profiter de ses ruins."—*Lebeau*.

BUT though the dynasty of Romulus and Augustus had closed, the genius of paganism had not yet expired. Surviving the enormous empire it had so long animated with unearthly vigour, and invested with majesty so terrible, this direful spirit sat brooding yet among the ruins of the seven hills. Its retrospects were not those of repentance, but of desperation: its antichristian feeling was, if possible, more malign, than in the days when a Nero or a Julian officiated as its pontiffs. Its only solace was to lay the odium of all the calamities of the world at the door of Christianity: to mutter curses against it, and to defend, with might and main, every surviving vestige of superstition.

Amongst the *FÆRIÆ*, or festivals of paganism in Rome, that of the Lupercalia, sacred to the Lycæan Pan, was at once the most ancient, the most popular with all ranks and sexes, and of a character the most gross, indecent, and demoralizing. The god in whose honour these solemnities were instituted, was the ideal of lasciviousness in all its most riotous and shameless excesses. Pan was invariably attended by troops of fauns and satyrs, (the proverbial emblems of im-

modesty and brutal desire.) The rites were worthy of the deities they were intended to propitiate. A he-goat was the chief offering: its flesh was roasted on willow spits; and after the feast, copiously crowned by the auxiliary gifts of Bacchus, they proceeded with the other devotions of the Lupercalia. In the impossibility of any literal description, these might be represented in general terms, as a carnival of the passions, if it were not that, they rioted through the streets and the crowded forum, under the broad glare of day, unmasked, and without any disguise or respect for decency whatever.

"This festival of the Lupercalia, whose origin had preceded the foundation of Rome, was still celebrated under the reign of Anthemius. 'The altar of Pan,'" continues Mr. Gibbon, "was erected perhaps by Evander, the Arcadian, in a dark recess in the side of the Palatine hill, watered by a perpetual fountain, and shaded by an overhanging grove. A tradition, that, in the same place, Romulus and Remus were suckled by the wolf, rendered it still more sacred and venerable in the eyes of the Romans, and this sylvan spot was gradually surrounded by the stately edifices of the forum." "The bishops of Rome," he continues, "were solicitous to abolish a profane custom so repugnant to the spirit of Christianity; but their zeal was not supported by the authority of the civil magistrate: the inveterate abuse subsisted till the end of the fifth century,\* and Pope Gelasius, who purified the Capitol from the last stain of idolatry, appeased by a formal apology the murmurs of the senate and the people."

What is here attributed to the entire community, was evidently the work only of a party. This is manifest from the address, in which the pope does *not* "*apologise* to the senate and the people." His apostolic indignation is directed "against one Andromachus, a senator, probably the city prefect, and other

\* A. D. 496.



Romans, (evidently members of the nobility,) who had come to the resolution of patronizing and upholding, according to ancient constitutional usage, the festival of Pan :” and this from a belief that the calamities of Rome were to be attributed to the neglect of that religion, under whose auspices the city had arisen to such unexampled renown and prosperity.

“ No,” exclaims the indignant pontiff ; “ but instead of being pious, shall it not be abhorred as a sacrilege, to apostatize from the recognition of the power and the providence of one only God, to embrace a foul and seductive superstition ? Are not the calamities of which you complain the just chastisement of our heinous offences, and especially of this attachment to the impious practices of magic arts, so hateful in the sight of Heaven, and not of the suppression of pagan practices ? But if all these disasters,” he continues, “ of which you complain, have been occasioned by this interference with the Lupercalia, where then is your own apology ? For, behold how far you fall short of the fervour of your ancestors in profanity. *They* were not withheld by their patrician rank from officiating publicly in those obscene solemnities : but *you*, their heirs and descendants, now blush to take a part in them yourselves, while you are eager to patronize and foment them among the vulgar. If you be in reality persuaded, as you profess to be, that your prosperity hangs upon the celebration of what you call *sacred*, whereas in truth they are only *execrable* rites : why do you not denude yourselves, *more majorum*, and let the lascivious buffoonery be no longer truncated and deprived of that patrician dignity, to which, by venerable usage, it is entitled ? If ‘ grand,’ ‘ salutary,’ ‘ divine,’ as you represent them : if upon their scrupulous observance depend your very lives, why are you ashamed to take an active part in their celebration ? But if it be a dishonour, and disgraceful for the nobility to appear among the devout worshippers of Pan, how can their welfare, their dearest interests, be concerned

in this worship? If it be salutary, if it be vital, to the commonweal, (oh, blasphemous impiety!) if, as you say, it be DIVINE, why are you ashamed of these divine, most salutary, and indispensable devotions? Nay, let your shame and confusion at the idea of practising in your own persons that which you encourage in your humble fellow-creatures, and uphold with all your influence, convince you that these abominations are not conducive to the public weal, but that they are a public enormity; that instead of being Divine institutions they are diabolical inventions. Tell me not that these impious festivals, because not abolished by our sainted predecessors, ought not to be interfered with by us. Many were the superstitions abolished and corrected by them; but they acted like wise physicians, who do not attempt to relieve the body of all its ailments at once, but attack separately that one only which threatens it with imminent dissolution:\* a procedure rendered necessary, either from the inability of the constitution to sustain the shock of so many remedies, or from the impossibility of human skill contending with a complication of diseases simultaneously. In fine, as for ourselves, we pronounce that no Christian can take part in these profanities. Leave them to the pagans who make them their religion; for those, who are regenerated in Christ, to practise them, is to bring inevitable ruin and perdition upon their immortal souls."

Deep-seated, indeed, in human nature, and in the very essence and texture of the social system then perishing and dissolving on all sides, must have been the mystery of iniquity which still survived, in despite of so many chastisements and efforts to eradi-

\* "Multa sunt, quæ singulis pontificibus diverso tempore sublata sunt noxia vel abjecta. Non enim simul omnes in corpore curat medicina languores, sed quod periculosius cōspicit imminere: ne aut materia corporis non sufficiat medicinæ, aut pro conditione mortali simul omnia non possit avertere."—*Gelas. Papa, ap. Baron. ann. 496, 40.*

cate it.\* “What wonder if the hand of Heaven be still upon us,” exclaimed a zealous bishop of that day, “seeing that even our chief magistrates are still inaugurated with all those profane and contemptible rites and observances, which were a laughing-stock to the wise, even in the palmiest days of heathenism? How can years, commenced under auspices of impiety, be expected to roll on under heavenly benedictions? or how can the many expect to escape the retribution due to these insults of the Divine Majesty, seeing that, although persisted in by the folly and pride of a minority, they are, as it were, assented to by all?”†

Even to human prudence it must have been evident, that, to effect that thorough reformation contemplated by Him who came to “make all things new,” every vestige of that order of society, which had grown up under the auspices of paganism, through every phase of its existence, should be cleared away, and reconstructed of new and sound materials, under the sanctifying auspices of Christianity.‡

The task of demolishing the last vestiges of the city and institutions of Romulus was reserved for Totila, a Gothic king, renowned for temperance and chastity; faithful to his word; and, what in a barbarian was strangest of all, by no means incapable of clemency to the vanquished: at least from the period of his conference on Mount Cassino, with St. Benedict.

The ferocious adventurer Odobagar, or Otochar, after extinguishing, as has been narrated, the dynasty of Romulus and Augustus, assumed the title of king of Italy. He and the savage hordes who were the

\* Even in 537, during the siege of the city by the Goths, “a fruitless effort to turn the double gates of Janus upon their rusty hinges, revealed the scandalous secret, that some Romans were still attached to the superstition of their ancestors.”—*Gibbon*, vol. v. p. 181, 182.

† “Illud est feralissimum et gravissimum quod, dum consensu publico aguntur, honor paucissimorum fit crimen omnium.”—*Salvian, de Vero Jud. ap. Baron. ann. 490, 47.*

‡ See Sismondi, *Fall of the Empire*, vol. i. p. 161.



partners of his fortune, Herulians, Turchilingi, Rugians, Huns, with their motley auxiliaries, continued to roam over the desolated tracts of that once most beautiful and martial land; never ceasing to pursue their trade of horror and rapacity, until his reign, or to speak more correctly, his invasion, of seventeen years was put an end to by the king of the East Goths.\* The struggle over the prostrate and bleeding spoil that took place between these ferocious chiefs, was sanguinary, destructive, and protracted. After several pitched battles, campaigns of devastation, sieges in which the few remaining cities were well nigh depopulated by the horrors of war and famine, Odoacer was at length driven to the last extremity. He offered to surrender on conditions, and Theodoric joyfully responded to his advances. They both met and cordially embraced each other under the gates of Ravenna; but, amidst the hilarity and confidence of the banquet in honour of their reconciliation, the Ostrogoth plunged a dagger into his rival's heart.† The crown thus acquired, after it had been worn by Theodoric thirty-three years, devolved upon Athalaric, the son of his only child, the beautiful Amalasontha. This princess, who is said to have been distinguished for prudence, love of justice, and a magnanimity quite heroical, had no sooner evinced a disposition to have the young king instructed in the arts and accomplishments of civility, than she was rudely menaced for the attempt by the leading nobility of the Ostrogoths, who forthwith deprived her of the tutelage of her son. The study of letters, they told her, was inimical to the martial

\* Murat. ann. 476—489.

† "In fatti dopo aver fatto buona ciera e carezze per aliquanti giorni ad Odoacre, invitatolo un dì a pranzo coi suoi cortigiani nel palazzo di Lauro gli fece levar la vita: e se vogliam credere all'anonimo Valesiano, lo stesso Teodorico di sua mano l'uccesse, con aggiugnere, che nel medesimo giorno tutti quei, che si poterano trovare del di lui seguito furono d'ordine d'esso Teodorico tagliati a pezzi."—*Murat. Ann. d' Ital.* ann. 493, tom. iii. par. i. p. 373, Roma, 1786.

spirit : it engendered meanness and timidity : that as for them, it was not a pedant, but a warrior-king they wanted,—a hero inured from boyhood in thought and action to the reckless liberty of a soldier. That the great Theodoric, who had made so many nations tremble, and had achieved so many conquests, did not know how either to read or write his own name, and that he had never permitted his Goths to go to school, saying, that spear and falchion were never wielded vigorously by those who had been accustomed to tremble at a rod. The result of this remonstrance was, that Athalaric, already prone to excess of passion, did not long survive his Gothic mode of education ; and the queen Amalasontha, who had kept up a friendly correspondence with the emperor of the East, having been barbarously murdered by Theodohatus, to whom she had given a partnership in the throne, her death afforded the excuse long desired by Justinian, for sending his armies into Italy. In the war which ensued, no less than fifteen millions of human beings, are calculated to have perished : it left Rome a perfect desert.

After the siege and capture of Naples, the far-famed Belisarius, who had risen from the obscurity of a Thracian peasant to command the armies of Justinian, pursued the same line of march that Hannibal had taken after the battle of Cannæ, and advanced by the Latin-way to Rome. As he approached it, the Goths withdrew, after an oppressive and destructive reign of sixty years.\* However, it was only to prepare for the fated city a new series of disasters, that they retired. From their rustic habitations, from their distant garrisons, the Goths are mustering once more upon the plains of Rimini to prosecute the great mission of Alaric ; and in the opening of spring, 537, their squadrons, pouring along to the number of 150,000 horse and foot, can be discerned from the walls, destined to be shaken by the fury of their assaults.

\* A.D. 536.

Procopius, the historian, who acted as secretary to Belisarius, and was an eye-witness of the scenes which he describes with eloquence, has left us a very singular anecdote relative to that portion of the city walls, called "Il muro torto," or the leaning wall, to the present day.\* "It was one of the first pointed out to his pioneers by Belisarius, as standing in need of being taken down and rebuilt from top to bottom; but the Romans besought him, on no account, to meddle with it; for that St. Peter had promised to take care of its defence. The event," he continues, "justified their reliance; for neither in the first assault, (which came upon that quarter of the city,) nor during all the time they beleaguered it, was that part ever once molested: an exception which filled us all with astonishment, so that no one ever daring to interfere with it afterwards, it remains there to this day, leaning over and shattered as when we saw it first."†

The desertion, during the night, of those who garrisoned the tower of the Milvian bridge, left the Goths to pass the Tiber unmolested and unobserved; so that Belisarius, in riding out with his guards next morning before the dawn, to reconnoitre their forces, deemed to be still beyond the river, was suddenly encompassed and attacked by their innumerable hosts. "The fate of Italy," says Gibbon, "depended on his life; and the deserters pointed to a conspicuous horse, a bay, with a white face, which he rode on that memorable day. 'Aim at the bay horse!' was the uni-

\* It is rather from the series of events, than from the text of Procopius (considered to be corrupt or interpolated in this part), that we ascertain the time of the first recovery of Rome with certainty. The year is 536, the month December (Evagrius, lib. iv. c. 19); the day, the 10th (Nicephorus Callisthas, lib. xvii. c. 13.)—See Gibbon, ch. xli. p. 176, note E.

† Procop. de Bel. Goth. lib. i. c. 13. "The fissure and leaning in the upper part of the wall which Procopius observed, is visible to the present hour."—Gibbon, *ibid.* The traveller may still see this wonderful monument of imperishable ruin, at about a furlong's distance from the Porto del Popolo, near the back entrance of the Borghese Villa.



versal cry. Every bow was bent, every javelin directed against that fatal object, and the command was repeated and obeyed by thousands who were ignorant of its real motive. The bolder barbarians advanced to the more honourable combat of sword and spear.

“Belisarius was strong, active, and dexterous: on every side he discharged his weighty and mortal strokes; his faithful guards imitated his valour, and defended his person; and the Goths, after the loss of a thousand men, fled before the arms of a hero. They were rashly pursued, and the Greeks, oppressed by multitudes, made a gradual, and at length a precipitous retreat to the gates of the city; the gates were closed against the fugitives, and the public terror was increased by the report that Belisarius was slain. His countenance was indeed disfigured by sweat, dust, and blood; his voice was hoarse, his strength almost exhausted, but his unconquerable spirit still remained; he imparted that spirit to his desponding companions; and their last desperate charge was felt by the flying barbarians as if a new army, vigorous and entire, had been poured from the city. The Flaminian gate was then thrown open to a *real* triumph; but it was not before Belisarius had visited every post, and provided for the public safety, that he could be persuaded by his wife and friends to taste the needful refreshments of food and sleep.”

But these displays of prowess, and the indefatigable valour and energy of the Greek general in defending the circuit of the walls, against the repeated and desperate assaults of the barbarians, instead of being advantageous to the doomed city, only served to hasten the destruction of its people and still remaining monuments. In the walls as repaired by Belisarius, the fragments of ancient architecture are still discernible. His style of erection was called “*opus tumultuarium*,” to indicate the heterogeneous character of the materials used, and the reckless hurry with which columns, statues, altars, and entablatures, were seized and piled indiscriminately together, with what-

ever else could help to fill up a breach. The work of destruction was carried on with equal industry outside the walls. The besiegers ruined all the noble aqueducts, that the supply of water might be cut off from the city, and it was also in this siege that the tomb of Hadrian was despoiled of the multitude of statues that adorned it. The Greeks, who had changed it into a fortress, in defending it against an attack of the Goths, tore the masterpieces of Praxiteles and Lysippus from their pedestals, and hurled the fragments into which they shattered them, down upon the heads of the assailants. The siege lasted an entire year, and entailed upon the unfortunate Romans the most bitter sufferings. Their granaries, which they had been compelled to store with the fruits of their hard toil, and with what should have been the subsistence of their families, were kept guarded that the foreign garrison might be feasted, while they, and their children and wives, were perishing of famine in the streets. They were next doomed to see the pledges of their affection torn from them, by those who called themselves their protectors, and sent into distant exile, exposed to every insult and privation; all on the plea of relieving the garrison. Even when the Goths retreated, the Romans had but little reason to rejoice: they had already found the Greeks to be worse tyrants than the barbarians had ever been.

The war went on, to the great honour and glory of Belisarius and his imperial master, but the following is a sample of the advantages it brought to Italy. During the horrors of the war, while the country was plundered and ravaged in all directions, by the Greek as well as the Gothic armies, no sowing of corn had been made during spring. Here and there the seed had been hastily scattered on the surface of the ground, or had remained from the shedding of the previous harvests; but not being covered in or tilled, only a few sickly blades sprung up at wide intervals, and sunk under the summer heat, without waiting for the sickle, or bringing even the smallest relief. Thus

it was in the richest lands around Urbino and Auximum: the same happened in *Æmilia*.

Thinking that the country of Picenum, from its maritime situation, might not be so destitute, the few remaining inhabitants of these parts, abandoning their homes, migrated thither across the Apennines. Nor was the scarcity that desolated Tuscany, arising from the same causes, less extreme. There, the people had taken to the mountain forests, and endeavoured to subsist on the glands of the oak and of other trees crushed into a sort of meal. From the constant use of food of this description, they became afflicted with all manner of diseases, as might be expected; and few were the survivors. In the district of Picenum, (whither we have seen those of *Æmilia* going as to a less afflicted province,) no fewer than 50,000 of the native population are said to have died of famine; and the mortality was much greater on the opposite shore of the Adriatic. "As to the spectacle these unhappy people presented, and how they perished, I, who was an eye-witness," says Procopius, "will now relate.

"All were lank as skeletons, and livid as death. For as the proverb has it, the flesh, for want of other nourishment, eat and consumed itself; and redundancy of bile, infecting the entire body, produced that pallid hue. As they advanced in the stages of starvation, the skin became arid, and broken, like the bark of a tree, and seemed to inhere and cling closely to the very bone. They became of a dark lurid colour, like to a burned stick; and on their visages sat a wild expression of horror. As they gazed on you, their frenzied eyes expressed their hideous longings; and whenever they fell on anything that could be eaten, they devoured it with such fury, that they perished, from their digestive faculties being destroyed. Their stomachs, which would have required such food and care as is given to infants, became overpowered, and thus repletion became more fatal to them than exhaustion. Famine drove some of them to feed upon one another;



and they say, that in a country village above Ariminum (Rimini) two women who alone survived, devoured no less than seventeen men, passengers, whom they used to kill when they were asleep at night. When they were preparing to murder the eighteenth, he awoke, and having discovered their horrid practices, slew them both. According to rumour, it was thus the matter happened:

“Whenever a herb was discovered, several rushed upon it together, and, down on hands and knees, endeavoured to tear up its very roots; but unable from exhaustion, they sunk down upon the earth, and expired. Nor did any one consign their bodies to the earth, for there was none among the living to care for the interment of the dead. But none of the birds of prey that are wont to feast on the dead so much as touched them; for there was nothing for them to feed on; every atom of flesh, as I have said already, having been wasted away by the effects of famine.”\*

Meanwhile the Greek arms were crowned in every direction with signal success; and nothing but this was wanted to consummate the destruction of Rome, and of whatever of Roman art and manners that still survived in Italy. Belisarius and his lieutenants had routed, and driven the Goths before them, from city to city—from Campania to Latium and the Abruzzi, from the Abruzzi and Latium to Tuscany and the Picenum, and from thence to the Cisalpine provinces,—leaving the entire length and breadth of the hapless land, from Naples to Ravenna, strewn with smoking ruins and heaps of dead. In the space of two years more, the Greeks were, in their turn, routed in all directions by the Goths, and the entire country, with its cities and fortresses, reconquered by Baduilla, or Totila, as he is more usually called, the Gothic king, who came to put the last hand to the *chef-d'œuvre* of desolation. He made it a general rule that the walls of all the cities, and every place that could

\* Procopius, de Bel. Goth. l. ii. c. 20.

afford shelter to his enemies, were to be levelled with the ground. This policy was pursued by him, in order to deprive the Greeks of the advantages they derived from their superior skill in the arts of defence, and to secure for the Goths the full advantage of their superior numbers and bravery, by bringing the war to an issue in the open field.\*

While this was Totila's style of proceeding, the Imperialists, officers as well as common soldiers, carried on the war against the unfortunate people within the walled towns, plundering them of their goods without mercy, and ill-using their wives and daughters; so that while the open country was ravaged by the infuriated barbarians, the cities and strong places were made scenes of worse horrors by the Greeks. Thus did every thing conspire for the extirpation of the once all-conquering people. "Moreover," continues Procopius, "the Cæsarians—generally foreign mercenaries—struck them, and insulted them for no cause at all, and so stripped them of every thing they had, that they died of destitution." The miseries of this system of free quarters, and the exactions of the imperial tax-commissioner, Alexander, whose judicious management of the public money had merited for him the title of "The Clipper,"—*Ψαλλικτιον*—caused the Romans to look back with sighs of regret to the far less insufferable tyranny of the barbarians.† To

\* "Impadronitosi di Benevento città riguardevole, vi fece spianar le mura per levar ai Greci il ricovero."—*Muratori*, ann. 542. "Fece depoi Totila spianar tutte le mura di Napoli, perche se mai venissero i Greci a ricuperar quella città, per mancanza di fortificazioni non vi potessero fermare i piedi. Il suo disegno era, di provar la sua fortuna con qualche battaglia a campo aperto."—*Ibid.*, ann. 543. "Totila fece diroccar le mura d'altre città forti nella Campania, e ordino alle sue genti di formare l' assedio di Tivoli."—*Ibid.*

† Procopius, de Bel. Goth. l. ii. c. 9. See also *Muratori*, ann. 541, et seq., wherein it appears, that the shave-beggar policy is very ancient, it having been practised with great effect by this Greek secretary for Italy; with this difference, that it was the Attic fashion to *clip* instead of *shaving*. "In Italia non altre novità succedono, se non che fu spedito da Justiniano Augusto a Ravenna, un certo Alessandro suo maestro del

crown their distress, the terrific plague that raged for the space of fifty years, and swept away a moiety of the human race all over the known world, arrived at this juncture on the shores of Italy,\* with the armies of the eastern emperor; and it was appropriately enough, amidst this combination of woes, that the king of the Ostrogoths, Totila, sat down before Rome for the last time, determined to finish what the Visigoths had begun under Alaric, and to leave the seven hills as desolate as they were before Romulus began to build the city.

conto, sopra nominato *Forbicetta*, perchè colle forbici sapeva si gentilmente tosare le monete d'oro, che non ne pativa punto il contorno delle lettere," &c.—*Murat.* ubi supra.

\* A. D. 543.



## CHAPTER IX.

“Egressis urbem Albanis, ROMANUS PASSIM PUBLICA PRIVATAQUE OMNIA TECTA ADÆQUAT SOLO, unaque hora quadringentorum annorum opus quibus ALBA steterat, excidio ac ruinis dedit—ROMA INTERIM CRESCIT ALBÆ RUINIS.”—*Tit. Liv.* l. i. 29.

“Double unto her double according to her works : in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.”—*Rev.* xviii. 6.

AFTER reducing,\* by force or treaty, the towns of inferior note in the midland provinces of Italy, “Totila,” says Gibbon, “proceeded, not by assault, but to encompass and starve the ancient capital.” Rome was afflicted by the avarice, and guarded by the valour of Bessas, a veteran chief of barbarian extraction, who filled with a garrison of three thousand Greek soldiers the spacious circle of her venerable walls. From the distress of the people he extracted a profitable trade, and secretly rejoiced at the continuance of the siege. It was for his use the granaries had been filled: the charity of Pope Vigilius, (then held in exile by the Greek court,) had purchased, and embarked an ample supply of Sicilian corn; but the vessels which escaped the barbarians were seized by the rapacious governor, who imparted a scanty sustenance to the soldiers, and sold the remainder to the wealthy Romans. The medimnus, or fifth part of the quarter of wheat, was exchanged for seven pieces of gold; fifty pieces were given for an ox. As for the commonalty, they were gradually reduced to feed on dead horses, dogs, cats, and mice, and eagerly to snatch the grass and nettles which grew among the ruins of the city.

“Among the Roman clergy of that day,” says Pro-

\* May, A.D. 546.

copius, "was the deacon Pelagius not long returned in great opulence from Byzantium, where, during his long sojourn, (as nuncio or apocrisarius,) he had grown into high favour with Justinian. The care of the Roman church had been confided to him during the exile of Vigilius; and as the distress of the siege increased, he distributed the most of his wealth among the indigent, thereby greatly adding to the high reputation he had already earned with all his countrymen. It was to this Pelagius that resort was had by the Romans in their extremity, imploring him to repair to the camp of Totila, to beg a truce even of a few days, at the expiration of which term they promised to surrender at discretion, if no relief in the interim arrived. The Gothic king received him with every honourable distinction, and embraced him with cordiality, at the same time declaring his unalterable determination to press the siege, and when taken, to level Rome with the earth. The Cardinal-deacon's appeal is given at length by the historian: he concluded it by solemnly warning the barbarian conqueror, that, high as he was, there was One still higher, whose indignation seldom failed to overtake those, who in their hour of triumph treated the supplications of the unfortunate with insolent contempt. —"Ἄλλ' ἔγωγε μεθεῖς τὴν πρὸς σε δέησιν, τὴν πρεσβείαν ἐς τὸν θεῖον μεταθήσομαι." Thus saying, Pelagius retired: whom when the Romans saw returning without having succeeded, their apprehensions became insupportable. Day by day, they saw themselves thinned by the raging famine, while whatever provisions remained were held by the garrison of foreign mercenaries for themselves.

Meanwhile, during the interval of expected relief, the famine became more terrible, suggesting aliment abhorrent not only to usage, but to human nature. And first of all, Bessas and Conon doled out the corn that had been stored, some of which had been grown within the city walls, at the most enormous price,—seven gold pieces the medimnus. The soldiers drove

a similar traffic in what they saved from their rations, and thus possessed themselves of whatever private wealth remained among the Romans. Those whose opulence could not reach this exorbitant demand, procured a sort of meal, for the most part bran, and endeavoured to eke out existence, by doling to their families this wretched fare in stinted portions. An ox, taken in a foray by the guards of Bessas, was sold to the Romans for fifty pieces of gold. He who met with a dead horse, or anything of that sort, was accounted most fortunate, and endeavoured to preserve the precious carrion by every art. As to the commonalty, they had nothing to live on but nettles, which grew in great quantities around the walls, and among the ruins; and to save their mouths and throats from being stung by them, they cooked them on the fire as well as they could. While money lasted, the higher ranks of the Romans procured food—meal and bran, as we have described; but when they had no more gold, they brought their most exquisite furniture into the forum, and gave it for what would provide a miserable meal. At length when the soldiers themselves had no longer any food to sell, nor the Romans money to give for it—the entire being reduced to the small store still held by Bessas—all, high and low, turned to the nettles. When even this resource failed, or could not satisfy the cravings of hunger,—exhausted, reduced to skin and bone, and changed to a dark livid colour, the population of the empress-city resembled so many spectres.

A crowd of these wretched beings, pale, emaciated, with bodies oppressed by disease, and minds distracted by despair, surrounded the palace of the Cæsarian generals, Bessas and Conon, urging with unavailing cries, that it was the *duty of masters not to leave their slaves to die of famine*. The voice of the lordly people, which used to give and take away kingdoms; which was canvassed for, obsequiously, by the conquerors of the earth, by such men as Marius, as the Scipios, as Pompey the Great, great Julius, and



Augustus Cæsar,—that voice so long the “suprema lex,” whose fiat sealed the destinies of mankind, is lifted now in agonizing supplication to move the sordid Bessas, with his handful of mercenary marauders, either to dole out the means of subsistence to his *slaves*, or if he refused that, to let them escape from the city to the camp of the Goths, or finally to command his soldiers to put a term to their insupportable miseries by the sword. Bessas, with heartless composure, expressed his regrets that it was not in his power to gratify any one of their wishes; since it was impossible to feed, unsafe to dismiss, and unlawful to slay the subjects of the Roman emperor.

Several, as they crawled away from this conference, still chewing the nettles, fell dead. They then resorted to everything most vile to satisfy the famine with which they were devoured, and not a few laid violent hands upon themselves in their distress. One father after listening till his heart was wrung to desperation by the cries of his five children—famishing for the bread he could not give—at last rose up: directing his children to follow him, he proceeded with calm and silent step to one of the bridges of the Tiber, and from its battlements flung himself into a watery grave, before the face of his orphans, and of the Roman people.

Then it was that Bessas began to trade in a new branch of misery: the sale of permissions to those who were able to pay for them, to escape from the city the best way they could; but these fugitives for the most part expired on the pulic highways, or were cut off by flying parties of the enemy. What wonder that Procopius should pause in his narrative to express his wonder to see the senate and Roman people made such cruel sport of by fortune: “Ρωμαίων μὲν οὖν τῇ τε βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ ἐκεχωρήκει ἐς τοῦτο ἢ τύχη.”

Meanwhile, the arrival of Belisarius at the mouth of the Tiber created the most feverish excitement of hope in the survivors. From the Capitoline towers,

from the Aventine, and the parapets of the walls, his cavalry could be already descried moving along the Ostian-way and the river banks, to cover a convoy of troops and provisions intended for their relief. These succours were conveyed in a flotilla of 200 boats, each boat being protected by a strong rampart of thick planks, with narrow slits and port-holes for the discharge of missiles. The entire flotilla, which was towed along by oxen in thousands, was commanded by Belisarius in person, standing on a wooden castle that floated on two large vessels, linked and fastened to one another by great beams of timber. This tower, which was of great height, was filled with a forlorn hope of the most desperate of his soldiers, and provided with a magazine of fire, sulphur, and bitumen, to be discharged from the parapets upon the enemy. Nor had Totila been wanting in foresight and exertions to prepare a becoming reception for the great captain. Ninety furlongs below the city, he had joined the two banks where the Tiber is narrowest, by the trunks of large trees in the form of a bridge. On this he erected two lofty towers, manned by the bravest of his Goths, well provided with whatever weapons and missiles were best calculated to inflict annoyance and destruction on the Greeks. The approach to the bridge and towers was covered by a strong and massy chain of iron.

Upon the issue of the collision for which Greek and Goth are equally prepared, and equally nerved, depends the forlorn hope of Rome. That hope also is wound up almost within grasp of certainty of liberation, as if to render the agonies of wild despair and distracted grief more insupportable. From their walls and towers, whence they had stretched out their lank arms, and raised their feeble shrieks as the battle raged, the Romans now beheld their last chance of deliverance put to flight before the barbarians, from whom there is now no possibility of escape.

But that the unity of the grand tragedy of retribution may be deficient in nothing, the city is doomed

to be taken for the last, as it had been the first time, by treachery and by night.

Four sentinels of one of the gates—Isaurians—let themselves down by a rope ladder from the battlements, while their officers and companions of the guard were sleeping, and soon found themselves in the presence of Totila, to whom they offered to betray the city. It was not, however, till they had twice repeated their nocturnal visit to the Gothic camp, and that he had the place carefully examined twice, that the Goth put his hands in motion, and silently entered the Asinarian gate. This was at dead of night. To guard against treachery or an ambush, the Goths halted in order of battle, soon as they had got within the walls, and rested on their arms, until the dawn brought with it the certainty that Bessas and his mercenaries had fled. Decius, Basilius, and a few other patricians, who still had horses to carry them, also took to flight; but the remnant of the senate and the people sought to shelter themselves from the sword, by crowding round the shrine of St. Peter. The names of Olibrius, Orestes, and Maximus, occur among those who were thus preserved.

“As soon as daylight,” says Gibbon, “had displayed the entire victory of the Goths, their monarch devoutly visited the tomb of the prince of the apostles; and while he prayed at the altar, twenty-five soldiers, and sixty citizens, were put to the sword in the vestibule of the temple.” For this tragic situation—Totila supplicating at the shrine of St. Peter, while his Goths are filling the vestibule of the temple with slaughter—we are indebted rather to the historian’s fancy, than to the text of Procopius. There is no warrant in that text for this revolting synchronism. On the contrary, it would rather appear that this partial massacre took place while the Goths were traversing the city, a distance of two or three miles from the Asinarian gate, close to St. John in Lateran, to St. Peter’s: for the narrative of Procopius is to this effect: “It being now clear day, and no room to suspect an



ambuscade or treachery, when Totila repaired for the sake of offering up his vows in the temple of Peter the apostle, the Goths in their fury fell upon such as they met : whereupon twenty-six of the soldiery, and sixty of the people were slain. When Totila came to the temple, Pelagius (the cardinal archdeacon before mentioned) presented himself before him, extending towards him the oracles of Christ, with outstretched hands, and earnestly implored him, saying :—‘ Spare, spare thy people, O king !’\* The king laughed scornfully, and said, in a tone of bantering, ‘ So now, Pelagius comes a suppliant !’ ‘ Yes,’ said Pelagius, ‘ a suppliant : because now, by the will of God, I am thy servant. But do thou, O king, for the rest, be clement to thy servants.’ ”

Yielding to this entreaty, he issued strict command that no Roman should be further injured or insulted ; but, after reserving a royal portion of the spoil for himself, he gave free license to the Goths to plunder and carry off whatever they thought worth taking. Great was the wealth still left in palaces, in the embellishment of which, nothing had been used but what was most exquisite and costly. In the palace occupied by Bessas, the gold, with whatever else was most valuable in Rome, was found in heaps ; and it would seem as if that sordid and hard-hearted wretch, aided by direful distress, had been sent as an active agent to wring from the grasp of the Romans their last obolus, and to scrape together everything in the shape of riches, that it might be ready to the barbarian hand which was to carry away, and scatter back again, this last balance of restitution over the long plundered earth.

In this revolution, the sons and daughters of Roman consuls tasted the misery which they had often spurned or relieved. In the tattered garments of slaves and handmaids, they wandered through the streets and begged a sordid pittance at the gates of their own

\* Mr. Gibbon has it—“ O Lord, have mercy on thy servant :” but that is not a fair translation of “ *φείδου τῶν σῶν, ὦ δέσποτα,*” the words attributed to the cardinal deacon by Procopius, lib. iii. c. 22.

hereditary mansions, now occupied by the barbarian conquerors ; often driven away with blows and ferocious mockery, to cast themselves down among the ruins of fallen empire and mourn over calamities too great for utterance. At length, when everything was collected from the palaces and public edifices that were still erect, Totila gave orders to prepare for the work of demolition. The walls first cemented by the blood of Remus, shed by the hand of his own brother, who gave a beginning and a name to Rome, had been expanding, from age to age, to make room for the spoils of one nation after another, until they attained their greatest expansion under Aurelian. Their foundations were again *consecrated* on that occasion, by the gore of barbarian captives immolated on the altars of the Capitol. To level them, therefore, to the ground was the first task of the Goths. Fire and engines were next prepared to consume, subvert, and tear down whatever of the seven-hilled city still remained entire ; “and the world,” says Gibbon, “was astonished by the fatal decree that Rome should be changed into a pasture for cattle.”\* The particulars of what ensued have not been left us by Procopius ; but Livy has vividly depicted what occurred when a decree, similar to that now pronounced against Rome by the barbarian, had been pronounced by Rome herself against Alba Longa. From her beauteous site, midway between the deep blue lake at the foot of the Mons Latiaris and its woody summit, this fair town had looked out over the Campagna, for centuries before its fields began to be ravaged, and its little cities plundered and burned by the hordes of Romulus. But her own turn arrived : her citizens were found guilty of having defended their lands and liberties ; and it was decreed by the Roman senate and people, that Alba should be razed to the ground.

“In the meantime,” says Livy, “the turms of

\* Μηλοβοτον, the word used by Procopius, signifies rather a “sheep-walk” than a “pasture for cattle.”

horsemen were sent forward to Alba, to conduct the captives from thence to Rome ; the legions followed in their rear who were to destroy the buildings. When they had entered the place, there was not, indeed, that tumult and terror usual when a city is taken by assault, either through a breach effected in the walls, or by battering in the gates, or, finally, when after carrying or surprising the acropolis or citadel, the victors rush, sword in hand, with dreadful shouts, to consume, pillage, and slaughter all before them. Instead of all this there was a mournful silence, a voiceless woe that had so overpowered and stupified the unfortunates, that, unable to determine what to take with them or what to leave behind, one time they stood looking at each other from their thresholds at opposite sides of the street ; at another, wandered up and down through their houses, as if to bid adieu for the last time to their hearths and the homes of their sires. But when the shouts of the horse troops, clamouring at them, and furiously urging them forth, came combined with the crashing sound of falling buildings, they are suddenly aroused ; and snatching up in grief and terror what each one could, after a distracted agonizing look at their household altars, at the homes of their birth and childhood, they hurry forth into the streets already enveloped in clouds of dust from their fast tumbling houses. At the sight of one another, they burst into tears : piteous wailings were also heard, especially from the females, when they saw, as they were hurried along, their august temples surrounded by armed men, and their gods, as it were, held prisoners. When the town had been cleared of its inhabitants, the Romans levelled it to the ground. They spared no edifice, private or public. In the space of one hour they reduced to solitude and a heap of ruins what the Albanese had been labouring to erect and beautify for four hundred years ; meanwhile," concludes the historian, " Rome prospers by the ruin of Alba."\*

\* " Egressis urbem Albanis, ROMANUS PASSIM PUBLICA PRIVATAQUE



Were it not for the interference and entreaties of Pelagius, the remnant of the senate would have been all executed the day after the city was taken: they were now rudely driven forth by the Gothic cavalry. They all perished not long after, being put to death in their own Campanian villas, which were made their prisons, while their sons were likewise massacred in the north of Italy. Thus did the institution of Romulus expire. As to the Roman people, a miserable handful of forlorn and emaciated outcasts,—not more than five hundred, men, women, and children, as they were,—was the only shadow left of that once mighty name. Even these were now led away into slavery by the Goths, who also tore down the gates of the Eternal City, and carried them off as trophies. Not a single human being was permitted to remain. The words most expressive of perfect solitude and desertion are those adopted by Procopius to describe the condition in which Totila left the region of the “Seven Hills.” “In Rome he suffered nothing human to remain, leaving it altogether, in every part, a perfect desert—ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἀνθρώπων οὐδένα ἑάσας, ἀλλ’ ἔρημον αὐτὴν τοπάραν ἀπολίπεν.”\* The account in the Chronicle of Marcellinus agrees with this nearly to the letter. “Every thing that had belonged to the Romans,” he says, “was carried away, and also the Romans themselves were led into Campania—captives. And after this devastation, Rome was so desolate, that, for forty days or more there was to be seen in it not a single inhabitant, but only wild beasts.”†

OMNIA TECTA ADEQUAT SOLO, unaque hora quadringentorum annorum opus quibus Alba steterat, excidio ac ruinis dedit—Roma interim crescit Albæ ruinis.”—*Tit. Liv.* lib. i. 29.

\* De Bel. Goth. lib. iii. c. 22.

† “Omnes Romanorum res in prædam (Totila) accepit, hos ipsos Romanos in Campaniam captivos abduxit. Post quam devastationem, xl. aut amplius, Roma fuit ita desolata, ut nemo ibi hominum, nisi bestię morarentur.”—*Marcel. in Chron.* p. 54.

## CHAPTER X.

“The world has never been so indebted to any other body of men as to the illustrious order of Benedictine monks.”—*Quarterly Review*, Dec. 1811.

IF Scipio might weep when surveying the ruins of Carthage, what wonder that Belisarius now wept over the scene of ruin which *he* beheld? The destroyer of Carthage felt saddened at the thought, that the fate of her now fallen rival might one day be the fate of Rome herself: but the catastrophe which Scipio contemplated as a thing merely possible, his great rival and successor in arms now beheld: he gazed upon it: contemplated the hideous skeleton of conquest, lifeless, sunk in dilapidation, the prey of every thing in the creation most savage and disgusting. He could hardly believe his senses. That the iron empire of Rome, constructed with such consummate wisdom, consolidated by ages, should have passed away like a vision appeared incredible. Though the fact was staring him in the face, though the dreary solitude, the prostrate ruins around, impressed it painfully on all his senses, it still appeared incredible, that the eternal city should have been reduced to a wilderness. But just as his mind was beginning to be again absorbed in a train of most melancholy reflections on the instability of fortune, and the vanity of human greatness, he was startled from his reverie by a strange sound,—a sound somewhat resembling a song of triumph chanted by many voices; and, looking in the direction from whence it came, to his great surprise, he beheld a procession of monks coming from the triumphal arch of Titus along the Via Sacra. They

moved, two by two, with solemn step, the cross borne on high like a standard in front. The ruins of the imperial mount and the Roman forum resounded with their canticles, as it were *their* battle-hymn, while they slowly advanced to where Belisarius was still seated on the Capitol. The hero rose up, unhelmed, as the cross approached him ; but his surprise at an interruption of his reveries, so strange and unexpected, was changed into reverential delight, when he recognised in the pilgrim train the august form and countenance of St. Benedict.

This great benefactor of his species had been sent, in the last years of the 5th century, from his native province of Nursia to Rome, for the sake of his education ;\* but the pagan licentiousness which would seem to have been still as prevalent in the Roman schools as it was in the days of St. Austin,† so excited the alarms of his pure and timorous conscience, that, while yet in his fourteenth or fifteenth year, he secretly withdrew from the city, and never paused until he found himself in a lonely and savage glen among the Apennines. There, deserting the left bank of the Anio, along which he had journeyed from Tibur, on by the ruined country house of Varus and Horace's Sabine farm, he climbed the steep side of a mountain that looked towards the south, and took up his abode in a rude grotto which he discovered about midway towards the summit. In front of this cave, and immediately under an overhanging precipice, there ran a

\* Boethius and St. Benedict may have been fellow-students, though from his having borne the consulship, A. D. 510, Boethius must have been his elder by several years. The Roman professorships, founded in pagan times, for the studies of grammar, rhetoric, and jurisprudence, still continued to be upheld even under the sway of the Goths. The proofs adduced to show that Boethius, so profoundly versed in Greek literature and philosophy, had ever been at Athens are extremely inconclusive. It is much more probable that he received his entire education in the Roman schools. See the Roman ed. of Muratori Ann. &c., ann. 510, p. 53, ann. 524, p. 101 ; also Tiraboschi, tom. iii. l. i. c. 4 ; Gib. ch. xxxix. p. 37.

† Confes. l. v. c. 12.



narrow terrace or ledge of rock, overgrown with vines, shrubs, and other brambles that afforded shelter to some herbage and wild flowers. On the opposite side of the glen, another mountain, craggy and precipitous as the one where he had taken refuge, so closed up the prospect, that nothing remained visible to the young eremite, but the deep blue heavens above his head, while from the profound and gloomy ravine below, there arose the everlasting echoes of a torrent, raving and struggling in its course, as if to remind him of the turbulent and agonizing world from which he had escaped.

Such was the retreat, where, unknown except to Heaven and the holy monk Romanus, who had encouraged him in his design, and used to bring him food occasionally, this angelic youth prepared himself, by prayer, meditation, and the conquest of his passions, to become instrumental in conferring on his fellow-creatures, the most inestimable and lasting blessings. In that solitary cave of Subiaco, he conceived the project of founding the illustrious order of Benedictine monks,—a community of religious men, who revived in their daily practices the manners and fervour of the primitive Christians; and, by devoting themselves to literature and the useful arts, as well as to piety, not only instructed and sanctified the ages in which they lived, but, by their labours, provided the means of learning and sanctification for posterity.

So great were the attractions of the sanctity of manners for which he became renowned, that, he who had fled from its temptations, ere long began as it were to draw the world after him into solitude. The proudest senators of Rome were solicitous to have their sons enrolled among his disciples. These so multiplied that, in a short time, the entire region of the Simbruinian mountains, as they were called, became interspersed with little colonies of his planting, while their preaching, and the lustre of their example, diffused the humanizing influence of Christianity through

sequestered glens and fastnesses, where till then the aboriginal superstitions of paganism had prevailed.\*

The rule of discipline which he drew up for these communities has merited the eulogies of St. Gregory the Great: it breathes the benign and humble spirit of Christian moderation and simplicity.

"The precepts of monastic perfection," he says, "are contained in the inspired writings; the examples abound in the works of the holy fathers. But mine is a more lowly attempt to teach the rudiments of a Christian life, that when we are acquainted with them, we may aspire to the practice of sublimer virtues."†

In distributing the various duties of the day, St. Benedict was careful that every moment should be diligently employed. Six hours were allotted to sleep. Soon after midnight the monks arose to chant the nocturns, according to the practice of the primitive Christians; and, like them also, they recited the prayers appointed for the several canonical hours of the day. By the original constitution, two hours were appointed for study and seven for manual employment; but, in process of time the transcription of manuscripts, and the cultivation of letters and sacred studies became the exclusive occupation of the choir monks, when not engaged in missionary duties.

Their diet was simple and sufficient; twelve, perhaps eighteen ounces, of bread, a hemina, or small flask of wine, and two dishes of vegetables, composed their daily allowance. The flesh of quadrupeds was strictly prohibited, but the rigour of the law was relaxed in favour of the children, the aged, the infirm. To the colour, the form, and quality of their dress, he seems to have been indifferent: merely recommending that it should be adapted to the climate, grave, and similar to that of the labouring poor. The monks always slept in their habit, or day dress, that at the first notice they might rise from their hard and nar-

\* S. Greg. Mag. Dialog. l. ii. c. 3, 4.

† Reg. S. Ben. c. 72, ap. Ling. Angl. Sax. Antiq.

row beds, to join the choir in singing the Divine praises. As with their models of the primitive ages, every thing was possessed in common ; not only articles of convenience, but even of necessity, were received, and resigned, as the abbot might direct. No brother was allowed to cross the threshold of the monastery without the permission of his superior : at his departure he requested the prayers of the community ; at his return he lay prostrate in the church, to atone for the dissipation of his thoughts during his absence. Whatever he might have seen or heard without the walls of the convent, he was commanded to bury it in eternal silence.

The favour of admission was purchased with a severe probation. On his knees at the gate, the postulant requested to be received among the servants of God ; but his desires were treated with contempt, and his pride was humbled with reproaches. After four days, his perseverance subdued the apparent reluctance of the monks ; he was successively transferred to the apartments of the strangers and of the novices ; and an aged brother was commissioned to observe his conduct and instruct him in the duties of his profession. Before the expiration of the year, the rule was read thrice in his presence ; and each reading was accompanied with the admonition, that he was still at liberty to depart. At last, on the anniversary of his admission, he entered the church, and avowed before God, and the community, his determination to spend his days in the monastic profession, to reform his conduct and obey his superiors. The solemn engagement he subscribed with his name, and deposited on the altar.\*

About the year of our Lord 529, St. Benedict led a colony of his disciples through the mountains, still farther towards the south, till he came to where had stood, beside the Latin-way, in the ancient territory of the Volsci, a villa of Marcus Varro. This villa,

\* See Lingard, *Angl. Sax. Antiq.* p. 112, 113.



which had grown into a town, was at the foot of a mountain, that rose, in the form of a truncated cone, to an immense height. This was Mount Cassinum; and on the table-land at the top of it, was a grove and a fane, or temple, where Apollo was still adored by the rustics of the surrounding country. "And in other consecrated groves," pursues St. Gregory, "all through those parts, the demons were still worshipped with sacrilegious victims and offerings, by ignorant multitudes devoted to all the insane superstitions of the gentiles."

What is here said of those mountain regions of Italy was equally applicable to every other quarter of Europe, until the establishment of the monks through the rural districts, and even in the most remote and savage glens and forests, exposed idolatry and superstition to a war of detail.

It was in the remote districts of the country that paganism found its last refuge, and attempted to rally its scattered forces. Its solemnities, when prohibited by law, continued to be carried on, even in the vicinage of towns and cities, under various pretences of rural sports and festivities. "On the days sacred to the various deities, their votaries," says Gibbon, "assembled in great numbers under the spreading shade of consecrated trees; sheep and oxen were slaughtered and roasted (in honour of the gods;) and all this was sanctified by the use of incense and the singing of hymns."\* Much had been done in Gaul by the zeal of St. Martin of Tours, and the numerous monasteries of his disciples;† but we can discover by the expressions of Salvian, and of St. Gregory the Great at a much later period, that paganism was still cherished in that country as well as in Italy; and that, not only by some of the rude peasantry, and by certain of the Germanic hordes, but still more tenaciously by many of the dissolute, old Roman race. But this last at-

\* See Hist. of Dec. and Fall, &c., ch. xxviii. vol. iii. p. 482.

† Vid. Sulpic. Sever. in vit. S. Mart. c. ix.—xiv.

tempt to resist the conquering influence of the gospel was entirely discomfited, when the monasteries of St. Benedict, like the military camps of old, became established wherever the powers of darkness might hope to rally, and all along the outposts of Christianity.

"Wherefore," continues St. Gregory, "the man of God, on arriving at Mount Cassinum, demolished the idol of Apollo, overturned the altar, set fire to the groves, and, dedicating the temple to St. Martin, and constructing an oratory to St. John the Apostle, where the altar of Apollo had stood, he continued by assiduous preaching to summon the multitudes of the surrounding districts to the faith."

From the summit of this mountain, as from another Horeb, the law of Christ was proclaimed through all the barbarian nations, to the remotest islands of the west. There, also, through many a dark and stormy century, the sacred flame of learning was fed and tended with solicitude. The remaining years of this great patriarch of monasticism in the west were spent not only in practising every Christian perfection, in diffusing the blessed and benign influence of the gospel far and near through Italy, but in training such disciples as St. Maur, who had already crossed the Alps, and laid the foundations of a society, which, by its literary and apostolic labours, has entitled itself to everlasting gratitude and admiration. A new illustration of the wonders which Christ can effect by the weak things of this world began to be displayed. Conquerors of themselves, these humble ascetics, with no shield but their own meekness, not only passed secure and respected midst all the horrors of barbarian warfare, but caused the fiercest of those who were indulging in orgies of blood and violence over the ruins of the empire they had overthrown, to look upon them with veneration, and to receive and observe their reprimands with the docility of timid children. "In the time of the Goths," says St. Gregory, "King Totila came to Mount Cassinum to visit the man of God. He had at first sent one of his chief officers

with a royal escort, and decked out so as to make St. Benedict imagine it was the king himself; but this party speedily returned abashed by the rebuke they met with for attempting this deception. Then did the said Totila, in his proper person, set out to visit the man of God; whom, when he saw at a distance as he was seated with his disciples around him, not presuming to approach, he prostrated himself upon the ground. To whom, when the man of God said two or three times, 'arise!' and that he was unwilling to do so, the blessed servant of Jesus Christ vouchsafed to approach to where the barbarian king lay prostrate. He benignly raised him from the ground, but at the same time reproached him severely for the atrocities of which he had been guilty,—atrocities so horrible, that Procopius declines, through a motive of humanity, to record them in his history.\* But these admonitions were followed by effects the most salutary; and Totila from that time became so distinguished for acts of clemency, justice, and chivalrous respect for female honour, as to win the admiration even of his enemies.† These were not the only points in which his conduct of the war stood in bright and enviable contrast with the atrocious violence and sacrileges of the Greeks; nor was the voice that had reprimanded the Goth on Mount Cassinum, now raised with less freedom and energy on the Capitol, to upbraid Belisarius for his share in a tragedy, that had shocked even the barbarians, and filled all Christians with grief and indignation. The transaction alluded to was briefly this:—

When it was perceived by King Theodohatus,‡ (who had so basely murdered the daughter of Theodoric,) that but little hope remained of dissuading Justinian from invading Italy, he wrote letters to Pope Agapitus, in which he threatened to have every one of the senators, their wives, and children, put to death, unless means

\* S. Greg. *ibid.* Procop. de Bel. Goth. lib. iii. c. 10.

† See for proofs, Murat. an. 543 and 536; also Procop. de Bel. Goth. lib. iii. c. 22.

‡ A. D. 535.



were found to turn aside the Greek emperor from his design. To ward off a stroke so terrible, the venerable pontiff did not hesitate to expose himself to all the perils and fatigues of a long and tedious voyage, the expenses of which could not be met but by pawning the sacred vessels of St. Peter's. But on arriving in Constantinople, he could gain nothing from Justinian. It happened, however, that, at that juncture, the patriarchate of the imperial city was occupied by one named Anthimus, a prime favourite and creature of the empress Theodora : but Anthimus had not entered by the door into the see of Constantinople ; his orthodoxy also was suspected. Therefore, the successor of St. Peter summoned him to account ; and after having convicted him of being unsound in faith, and an intruder, degraded and ejected him from the patriarchate, notwithstanding the most violent opposition from the court. He then instituted in his stead, a holy bishop named Mennas, venerable for sanctity, and of undoubted purity of belief. But after this signal display of his supremacy, where all that was most powerful was arrayed against him ; and, after having, with the applause of all orders of the clergy, arranged the affairs of the oriental church, distracted as usual by various heresies, the holy pontiff Agapitus died ; and one of the first orders received by Belisarius after he had got possession of Rome, was to induce Pope Silverius to reverse his predecessor's decree ; or, in case he refused to declare Mennas deposed and reinstate Anthimus, to expel him from the apostolic see. In order to cover the infamy of the latter mode of proceeding, to which Belisarius resorted on the steadfast refusal of the pope, it was pretended that letters of his had been intercepted, in which he offered to betray the city to the besiegers. After being rudely stripped of his pontifical robes, and loaded with insults by Antonia, the adulterous wife of Belisarius, (who submitted to her orders, as she did to those of Theodora,) the holy confessor was torn from his afflicted people, and transported into distant exile. Old age

and suffering must have speedily put an end to his existence; but they were too slow in their effects to satisfy the rage of these two infamous women. Procopius relates, that they had him assassinated by a ruffian named Eugenius, who was constantly in their pay.\*

It was when the hero would excuse himself, and justify whatever had occurred, by expatiating on the magnificence and glory of the enterprise which his imperial master had in view,—(that of re-establishing the ancient empire and grandeur of Rome,) then it was that the venerable form and countenance of St. Benedict assumed a prophetic majesty, while he announced the immutable interdict of Providence against this attempt.

\* The original documents connected with the decisive acts of supremacy exercised in Constantinople by Pope Agapitus may be consulted at length, in the Annals of Baronius under the year 536. The violence offered to his successor is another striking authentication of those acts. It is spoken of by the most temperate historians in terms of execration: Muratori styles it, “Un esecrabil’ rivoluzione;” and adds: “Simili iniquità non s’erano provate sotto i re Goti; anzi,” &c.—Ad ann. 537. The fact of the pope having been murdered by an emissary of Antonia is mentioned in the *Histor. Arcan.* of Procopius, c. i. Even all that Gibbon can allege, in extenuation of the base part taken in the transaction by Belisarius, is this: that “the hero obeyed the orders of his wife (whom he knew to be an adulteress:) Antonia served the passions of the empress.” Ch. xli. p. 188. Theodora herself was the daughter of a charioteer, and had been notorious for her dissolute habits before the Emperor Justinian espoused her. Both were meet forerunners of the Marozias and Theodoras of the tenth century.

## CHAPTER XI.

“ In this period of the world, in this decisive crisis between ancient and modern times, in this great central point of history, stood two powers opposed to each other. On one hand we behold the Roman emperors, the earthly gods, and absolute masters of the world, in all the pomp and splendour of ancient paganism, standing, as it were, on the very summit and verge of the old world, now tottering to its ruin ; and on the other hand, we trace the obscure rise of an almost imperceptible point of light, from which the whole modern world was to spring, and whose further progress and full development, through all succeeding ages, constitutes the true purport of MODERN HISTORY.”—*F. Von Schlegel, Lect. on Hist., Robertson's Trans.*

“ It was as a king,” said St. Benedict, “ and as the founder of a kingdom, that the Messiah was fore-shown to the prophets. ‘ His empire shall be multiplied,’ says Isaiah ; ‘ he shall sit on the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it and strengthen it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and for ever.’\* It was as a king, and as the founder of a kingdom, that he was looked forward to, and wished for by all, whether Jews or Gentiles ; and their unanimity in this respect shows how conspicuously marked in the Messiah must have been this characteristic of royalty ; because, in general, the sects were at variance as to the sense and application of the prophecies. He was spoken of as a king, and as the founder of a kingdom that was to embrace all nations and to last for ever, by the arch-angel who was sent to announce the incarnation. ‘ He shall be great,’ said the celestial messenger to the royal virgin, ‘ and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father ; he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom

\* Ch. ix. 6, 7.



there shall be no end.\* When the Magi led by the star arrived at Jerusalem, they said, 'Where is he that is born king of the Jews?' In the manger the Messiah was worshipped as a king; it was as a king they mocked and crucified him; and Pontius Pilate refused to alter the title in which he styled him 'king;' because it was by Divine ordination that inscription had been placed above his head; that head which was also adorned with a crown, (albeit of thorns,) even in death. The angel of the wilderness, sent before his face like a herald to prepare the way for his immediate advent, came crying out, 'Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!†

"At length, in the fulness of time, the Messiah himself appears. Does he at once, as was expected by all, hoped and desiderated by his own, burst environed with splendour upon the astonished world an irresistible and wide wasting conqueror? He only begins, himself, to preach 'the kingdom.' In his sermons on the Mount, and on the borders of Genazareth; in his parables to the multitude; in his colloquies with his selected disciples, it is still of 'the kingdom' he discourses. In furnishing his disciples with instructions for their first embassy to 'the house of Israel,' he merely tells them to proclaim that 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand;' they ask to be taught how to pray; and still it is of 'the kingdom'—'Thy kingdom come!'

"His entire being seems absorbed in this one thought: his discourses and miracles have no other scope: but still he does not set about founding the kingdom: he still speaks of it, as if it were yet to come. That he, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary, is the Messiah of whose universal empire such wonders have been predicted; this he proves by every species of evidence: he makes this fact not only certain, but the pivot, and keystone, and immovable foundation of certainty itself; the pillar and ground of truth.

\* St. Luke i. 38.

† St. Matt. iii. 2.

He defines the constitution of the kingdom, expounds the code by which it is to be governed, calls, nominates, and ordains the great officers of his administration ; nothing is left incomplete : he provides a treasury for this empire more than commensurate with its immensity, worthy of the giver. But still the kingdom itself is not founded. His disciples, who knew and confided in the latent powers of his Divinity, had flattered themselves up to the last moment, that though he thus suffered hope to be deferred, his majesty obscured, that the stupendous outburst would not fail to come suddenly. Behold them now upon Mount Olivet, after he has left them—bid them a last farewell—returned from the earth to his throne above the heavens—and where is the kingdom foreseen by so many prophets, so often pronounced, as at hand, by the archangel, by St. John the Baptist, by the Messiah himself? There is not a vestige of its existence anywhere to be traced. The long expected has arrived, ‘walked openly in Israel,’ proclaimed himself in the temple—but he is gone ; he has ascended : the longing eyes of his apostles have lost sight of him in the clouds of heaven ; as yet no empire, no nation, no city, or town,—no, not even one single petty hamlet in the land of his own nativity, has acknowledged the sovereignty of Jesus Christ ! Never was there a group of beings more destitute, bewildered, and forlorn, than the eleven poor men upon Mount Olivet after they had lost sight of their beloved Master. Yet there is nothing more evident in the gospel ; indeed, it is the practical conclusion and gist of the entire gospel history, that the destinies of the Messiah’s kingdom rest upon this little group. Just before the Messiah ascended he said to them, ‘Do you go and found the kingdom ; take care and realize all the wonderful things the prophets have foretold concerning it. I commission you to go and conquer all nations, and bring them to recognise me as their King.’

“ You cannot refrain from smiling at this commis-

sion," said St. Benedict to the Greek general: "it is so unlike the mode of proceeding which you, as a leader of great enterprises, have been accustomed to. The commission given you to recover Africa, for instance, or, still more recently, to drive the Goths from this country, you would have regarded as mockeries, if you were told by your imperial master to go and carry them into effect, without being supplied with any visible means whatever. The poor men were sent, nevertheless, empty handed—bidden to take with them either scrip or staff—to the conquest of the world: warned not even to premeditate, or heed, what, in the most critical conjunctures, they were to say. Well may you, as one practised in affairs, as one having experience of all that is required for the success of great enterprises,—well may you laugh at the idea of commissioning twelve poor, narrow-minded, timid men, to go, without visible means of any description whatsoever, to effect the conquest of the whole world.

"Well, they did go, however, as they had been commanded; and they had not yet finished their course when St. Paul could tell the Colossians that the gospel was heard by every creature under heaven: that it was preached, that it 'brought forth fruit, that it was increasing all over the world.'\* But did the new empire decline and fall after their death? 'Convinced, by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ,' says St. Clement, 'and confirmed in the divine doctrine by the grace of the Holy Ghost, the apostles went to preach the *kingdom of God*. They preached in the cities, in the rural districts; and after spiritual probation, instituted the first converts to be bishops, and servants of those who were by a similar mode of consecration to become in turn their own successors in the apostolic ministry;† and such was the success of this new generation of conquerors, delegated by the apostles, as they had

\* Coloss. i. 5, 6, 23.

† S. Clem. i. ad. Cor. c. 42. It was customary to have these letters of Pope St. Clement read in the liturgical service on Sundays



been themselves delegated by Christ, that, in their times, hardly was there any country so remote, or so unknown, that the Gospel had not reached it. The last of the apostles had not been long dead, when St. Justin reckoned already among the liege subjects of Christ, a great many savage nations, and even nomadic tribes, who roamed the wilderness without any fixed habitations.\* A little later comes St. Irenæus, and the empire has increased. He expatiates on its admirable *unity*: 'what was believed in the Gauls, in the Spains, in Germany, was believed in Egypt, and in the East; and as there was but one sun in the whole world, the same light of truth shone in the whole church, from one end of the earth to the other.'†

"Christ had made this very unity the object of his prayer for his disciples: he had prayed that they might be one: that not only they, but also that all who, through them and their successors, were to believe might be one—united by a communion so perfect that it was to be illustrated by nothing less than that ineffable communion existing between the three Divine persons of the most blessed Trinity. In this, too, he constituted the distinctive characteristic by which his empire was to be recognized, easily and at a glance.‡

"Hence, so highly prized was this character, so sacred, in the church of Corinth. So says S. Dionys. Corinth. ap. Eus. His. Eccl. l. iv. c. 23. See also Tertul. de Præscr.

"The apostles," says Pope St. Clement, "understood from our Lord Jesus Christ that there were to be rivalries concerning the episcopal dignity; it was on this account they took the necessary precautions. They instituted bishops, and ordained that, in case a church was without a bishop, the chiefs of the neighbouring churches should take charge of it, to the end that those who had departed might be succeeded in the service by others equally experienced. *Καὶ οἱ ἀποστολοὶ, κ. τ. λ.*"—Ep. i. ad Cor. c. 44. St. Cyprian gives a similar view:—"Ut ad ordinationes rite celebrandas, ad eam plebem cui præpositus ordinatur, episcopi ejusdem provinciæ proximi quique convenient, et episcopus deligatur præsentē plebe," &c.—Ep. 68.

\* St. Justin. Apol. ii. et adver. Tryphon.

† Iren. adv. Hær. i. 23.

‡ Gospel of St. John, xvii. 20, 21.

and inviolable was it esteemed to be, that the greatest lights of the church did not hesitate to rank the merit of martyrdom suffered for its preservation, above martyrdom for the faith; 'because in the latter case,' says St. Dyonisius of Alexandria, 'we bear witness only for our own souls, in the former we bear witness for the church.'† This was not a mere concrete unity, like that of any mass of substances or persons brought together accidentally, it was a unity‡ in plurality, a unity of organization, like the union of many various members in the human body.

"Each individual member of Christ's kingdom, or mystical body, was bound to be in communion, and to sympathize with all the rest; this he did by being in communion with his bishop: who was, as it were, the personification of the divine charity that animated the entire flock. He was the common centre of his people; the visible antitype for them, of the Redeemer: without whom nothing could be undertaken in the church lawfully, or even without grievous criminality.§ In

† Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. b. vi. c. 43, 44.

‡ The epithet *Catholic*, used by St. Ignatius, ad Smyr. c. 8, and by Clem. of Alex. Strom. l. vii. c. 15, as the distinctive title of the church of Christ, involves this idea of unity: for the Greek word *δλος* is applicable only to objects of such a nature, as that their parts cannot be conceived in a state of separation from the whole which they constitute. To use a theological phrase, they can have no hypostasis or subsistence of their own. Thus *δλος* is correctly applied to a drop of water, or to the human frame, but not to a house. It is equivalent to the Latin words *totus* and *universus*.

§ It would not be possible to enforce this point in terms more energetic and precise than those used repeatedly by the great St. Ignatius, whose master in theology was the apostle and evangelist St. John. Thus he says:—"Χωρίς ἐπισκοπου μηδεν ποιειτε,"—*Ad Philad.* c. vii. "Ὁ λαβρα του ἐπισκοπου τι πρασσω τω διαβολω λατρευει,"—*Ad Smyr.* "Ille sacerdos vice Christi vere fungitur, qui id quod Christus fecit, imitatur,"—*Cypr.* Ep. lxvii. He says, the bishop is the successor of the apostles: "εἰς τοπον συνεδριου των ἀποστολων προχαθημενος,"—*Ad Magn.* vi. Similar is the language of St. Irenæus:—"Habemus annumerare eos, qui ab apostolis sunt instituti in ecclesia episcopi, et successores eorum usque ad nos," &c.—*Adv. Hæres.* l. iii. c. 3, 12.

short, it was a proverbial saying, that ‘the bishop was in the church, and the church in the bishop ;’\* and again a church was defined to be a community united in its bishop, a flock adhering to its pastor ;† and as the members, laity and clergy, of each particular community, or district church, were bound to be thus in communion with the bishop or supreme pastor, teacher, and high priest of that church ; so were all the bishops bound to be in communion with each other : not by any vague, remote, casual sort of communion ; but by a communion the most strict and intrinsical : so much so, that, by Divine ordination, the very episcopate itself, of which each bishop held his part ‘in solidum,’ was strictly speaking, ONE,‡—one soul dispersed through the whole hierarchy, in virtue of which, each member was responsible for all the rest. But how, by what means, was a communion so vital and exquisite to be maintained, in despite of so many and powerful tendencies to disorganization ? If all the precautions already stated, were required, in order to secure and perpetuate unity in each small district or diocese, how is it to be realized and preserved in the immense empire itself ?”

BELISARIUS.—“By establishing for the entire church an institution precisely similar to that appointed for the preservation of district unity ; one grand centre, round which all the lesser lights were to revolve, to which they were to tend and be attracted, with which they were to be in vital, avowed, permanent communion : in a word, by appointing a viceroy with competent authority over the entire kingdom.”

ST. BENEDICT.—“This is precisely what took place. The kingdom was founded and based on unity : it was built on Peter ; Peter was appointed viceroy ; received the solemn investiture of the entire realm of Christ

\* “Scire debes episcopum in ecclesia et ecclesia in episcopo.”—*Cypr. Ep. lxix.*

† Id.

‡ “Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur.” *S. Cypr. de Unit.*



with sovereign authority and jurisdiction over all its liege subjects, princes and people. Hence all the bishops were bound to be in communion with the see of Peter, whence sacerdotal unity (that is, the unity of the bishops,) was said to take its rise.\* The principality conferred on Peter descended to his successors. The church in Rome was said to preside,† to be ‘the directrix of the testament of love:’ to be the depository of apostolical tradition, to enjoy a princely or supreme authority, in virtue of which, all the other churches dispersed over the whole world were bound to be conformable in faith, to be united in ecclesiastical communion with it.‡ This was a matter, not of option, or of convenience, but of strict necessity; (‘necesse est.’) This commerce of ‘all that belonged to Christ in the whole world’ with the see of Peter, was fostered and expressed, not only by letters called ‘formatæ,’ and by constant embassies, but even by the transmission of the blessed eucharist: and to have received these testimonials of communion from the see of Peter, was to be in communion with the whole catholic church; for it was by holding to the great centre by these endearing and awful bonds, that the churches, everywhere dispersed, maintained communion with one another.§ Hence, from the time the fisher-

\* “Ad Petri cathedram, atque ad ecclesiam principalem, unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est,” &c.—*S. Cypr. Ep. 55, ad Cornel.*

† *S. Ignat. ad Rom.* “Ἦτις προχάθηναι ἐν τοῦ αὐτοῦ χωρίου Ῥωμαίων.”

‡ “Ad hanc enim ecclesiam propter potiore principalem necessesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est eos qui sunt undique fideles, in quâ semper ab his qui sunt undique, conservata est ea, quæ ab apostolis est traditio.”—*S. Iren. contr. Hær. l. iii. 13.*

§ Thus *St. Optatus Milerit.* says of the Roman church:—“Cum quâ totus orbis commencio formatarum in unâ communicationis societate concordat.” Tertullian, much earlier:—“Communicatio pacis, et appellatio fraternalis, et contesseratio hospitalitatis; quæ jura non alia ratio regit, quam ejusdem sacramenti una traditio.—Communicamus cum ecclesiis apostolicis, quod nulla doctrina diversa,” &c.—*De Præscr. c. 20, 21.* *St. Augustin* says, that the church of Africa NEVER—“nunquam”—communicated with the oriental church, otherwise than through the church of Rome. (*Contr. Crescon. l. iii. 38.*) His memorable saying: “Roma locuta est, causa finita est,” expressed the sense of the Catholic world in his days.

man fixed his throne beside that of the Cæsars, Rome became the capital of Christ's empire ; and thus was the centralization of the Roman government made ancillary to the preservation of unity in Christ's kingdom, as its vast extent and opportunities of intercommunication had been to the diffusion of the gospel.

"Meantime the war of extermination, commenced by Nero, was carried on against the empire of Christ : and Roman emperors were heard to declare, that they had rather suffer a rival to assume the purple than a successor of Peter to be elected. Under these trials nothing so much contributed as its unity to preserve the church. It was impossible to annihilate a body so organized, and so immense. Hence those wicked spirits who had stirred up the persecutions to ward off the assaults of the Christian powers,—making rapid and incessant inroads on the realms of idolatry,—determined next, as a diversion, to attack this organization itself. They fomented heresies. Idolatry seemed for a moment to triumph. In the intestine disorders that ensued, Celsus and others seemed to discover the indications that Christianity, till then so formidable, was about to be dissipated, like the other sects of philosophy that had arisen before it, to be lost after a time in discord and subdivisions.\* But this attempt to loosen the bonds of unity only caused them to be tightened. The church gained force and majesty, by having its latent energies developed and called into play ; and the pagans themselves were soon able to point out the Great Church, as they called it, amongst such a multitude of heretical bodies : the champions of the true faith discomfited all their antagonists, covered them with defeat and confusion, 'confounded them,' as St. Ireneus says, by one argument, by challenging them to prove their communion with the apostolic see, with the chair of unity. Here was the grand characteristic and token of legitimacy, which no ingenuity could forge or coun-

\* Orig. l. v. contr. Cels.

terfeit.\* The church in communion with the see of Peter—the empire that was subject to *his* sway, to whom were given the ‘keys of the kingdom of heaven’—was one; it was Catholic; it derived from the apostles, who derived from Christ: all who forsook her, had formerly acknowledged her; nor were they ever able to deface the marks of their innovation and rebellion. The heathens themselves looked upon her as the stock, the whole, ὅλος, from whence the parts had broken off, the ever living trunk, which the lopped branches had left entire: the supreme church, to which all the others were bound to be subordinate and obedient.†

“No matter what the genius, how great the eloquence, erudition, repute for sanctity, for invincibility of argument, for wisdom,—no matter how formidable the array of numbers, how vehement and long sustained the reclamation, of those who have endeavoured to turn aside the see of Peter from its course, and to make their own views prevail, the result, sooner or later, has been invariably the same: Rome triumphs; and when the clouds of overheated zeal disperse, it becomes obvious even to the reclaimants themselves, that their own defeat was providential. Thus it was with regard to the discipline of celebrating Easter, and of *not* rebaptizing those converted from heresy. In every such emergency the successors of Peter held immovably by the pillar and ground of truth, apostolical tradition,—resisting innovation, rejecting novelties, no matter under what attractive guise, or with

\* Iren. contr. Hær. iii. 1—4. Tertul. de Carn. ii. ; de Præscr. xx. xxi. xxxii. xxxvi. Even after this great spirit fell into heresy, he still bore testimony to the supremacy of the successors of Peter, fiercely upbraiding the Pope, who condemned his Montanist errors, with setting himself up as bishop of bishops, and as the “Pontifex maximus” of Christianity.

† This is strikingly illustrated by what is told of the Emperor Aurelian by Euseb. Eccl. Hist. book vii. ch. 24. To have the disputes relative to Paul of Samosata set at rest, he commanded that whatever the Pope with the Italian bishops (his ordinary council) might decide, should be obeyed.



what repute of sanctity and learning they appeared. 'Nil novandum!' No innovation, no new inventions! was the watch-word that passed along from age to age. For the successors of the apostles understood their trust too well, not to know that it consisted, not in amassing the inventions, and vain conceits of mortals, to be imposed upon posterity labelled and authenticated, as if they came from God, but in handing their successors the deposit, in full, perfect integrity, just as they had received it from their predecessors; so that each could say as it passed from hand to hand: THIS IS THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS: it is the faith of Peter—that identical doctrine, neither added to, nor subtracted from, which the apostles received from Jesus Christ, and preached by the inspiration of the Paraclete.\* Hence the greatest doctors of the church, as well as the most

\* The following exposition of St. Vincent of Lirrens, is but vaguely and feebly represented in the text: "Cum ergo undique ad novitatem rei cuncti reclamarent, atque omnes quaquaversum sacerdotes pro suo quisque studio reniterentur: tunc beatæ memoriæ Papa Stephanus, Apostolicæ sedis Antistes cum cæteris quidem collegis suis, sed tamen præ cæteris restitit; dignum (ut opinor) existimans, si reliquos omnes tantum fidei devotione vinceret, quantum loci auctoritate superabat. Denique in epistola, quæ tunc ad Africam missa est, idem his verbis sanxit. NIHIL NOVANDUM; NISI QUOD TRADITUM EST (nempe servetur.) Intelligebat etenim vir sanctus et prudens, nihil aliud ratione pietatis admittere, nisi ut omnia, quæ fide a patribus suscepta forent, eâdem fide filiis consignarentur: nosque religionem, non quæ vellemus, ducere, sed potius quâ illa duceret, sequi oportere; idque esse proprium Christianæ modestiæ et gravitatis, non sua posteris tradere, sed a majoribus accepta servare. Quis ergo tunc universi negotii exitus? Quis utique, nisi usitatus et solitus? Retenta est scilicet antiquitas, et explosa novitas.

"Sed forte tunc ipsi novitiæ ad inventioni patrocinia defuerunt. Imo vero tanta vis ingenii adfuit, tanta eloquentiæ flumina, tantos assertorûm numerus, tanta verisimilitudo, tanta divinæ legis oracula, (sed plane novo ac malo more intellecta,) ut mihi illa conspiratio nullo modo destrui posse videatur, nisi solam tanti moliminis causam, ipsa illa suscepta, ipsa defensa, ipsa laudata novitatis professio destituisset. Postremo ipsius Africani concilii sive decreti quæ vires? donante Deo nullæ: sed universa tanquam somnia, tanquam fabulæ, tanquam superflua, abolita antiquata, calcata sunt."

—*Vincent. Lirin. contr. Hær. c. 9.*

simple of the laity, have ever fled to the see of Peter in time of peril, as to the only ark of salvation. From the heart of Asia, and while under the shadow, as it were, of the most ancient and apostolic sees of Jerusalem, Ephesus, and Antioch, it is still to the successor of Peter the great St. Jerome cries out for aid, and to be strengthened and confirmed, amidst the confusion and violence in which the entire East had been involved by the Arian heresy. 'United to the communion of your Holiness,' he writes to Pope Damasus from the deserts of Syria, 'that is to say, united to the chair of Peter, I am following no other than Christ. I know the church is founded on that rock. Whoever eateth the Lamb out of that House is a profane man. Whoever is not in the ark shall perish by the flood. But inasmuch as it is impossible for me to receive the sacrament at your hands, retired as I am in the Syrian wilderness, I follow your colleagues, the Egyptian bishops. I do not know Vitalis : with Meletius I do not hold communion : to me Paulinus is a stranger. (These bishops of the surrounding sees were of suspected faith.) He that gathereth not with thee scattereth. I cease not to proclaim, He is mine, who remains united to the chair of Peter.—Ego interim clamito, si quis cathedræ Petri jungitur, meus est.'\*

"According to St. Athanasius, there were in the council of Sardica three hundred bishops : Sulpicius Severus says† it was convened from the whole world ; Socrates‡ calls it a general council, [its legitimacy is admitted even by the centuriators of Madgeburg :]§ it should have been stated that St. Athanasius names the provinces from which the bishops came,—from Italy, Gaul, Spain, Africa, Britain, Egypt, Syria, Thrace, Pannonia, &c. : its ordinances and decrees were directed to be observed 'by the Catholic church diffused over the whole world.' Now its fourth canon is to this effect : 'When any bishop, on being

\* S. Hieron. Ep. xiv. et xv. ad Damas. Op. tom. iv.

† L. ii.

‡ L. ii. c. 16.

§ Cent. iv. c. 9.

deposed by the bishops of the province to which he belongs, makes his appeal to Rome, let no other on any account whatsoever be substituted in his see pending the appeal, or until the cause shall have been determined by the bishop of Rome.' Again, in the seventh canon, they lay down the various modes of procedure, any one of which it was competent for the Roman see to adopt: 1st. That the Pope would deign (*dignetur*) to write to the bishops of the neighbouring sees to examine diligently into the cause of appeal, and to adjudicate upon it in fidelity and truth. 2ndly. That if the Pope so will it, it shall be competent to him to send a legate '*e latere suo*,' even a presbyter, to decide the case. 3rdly. The Pope may send his legate to reassemble the synod, and conjointly with them to decide; or lastly, if it shall seem sufficient to refer the case back again for revision by the same bishops, let him do, says the decree, that which in his most wise counsel he shall deem most fit: '*faciat quod sapientissimo concilio suo judicaverit*.' But Rome, as St. Leo the Great said, in his rescript\* to the bishops of Gaul, did not stand in need of the decrees of Sardica; they only reasserted and gave their solemn sanction to what had been from time immemorial the usage of the church.† Even the heathens knew well

\* Ep. 89.

† "*Antiquissimam consuetudinem*."—*Ibid.* We have instances of such appeals from the earliest times; Marcion, for example, condemned in Pontus, by the local bishop, appeals to Rome, A. D. 142; vid. Epiph. Hæres. 42. Fortunatus and Felix from Spain, in the time of St. Cyprian; and Basilides from the same province not long after; also St. Dionysius, of Alexandria, is obliged by the appeal of his own suffragans, or diocesans, to plead before the Holy See. St. Athanasius, when deposed, appeals to Pope Julius the First, and is restored; the patriarchs of Constantinople and Antioch were reinstated by the same Pope. St. Jerome tells us, that when he was secretary to Pope Damasus, he had to answer synodal letters from all parts of the East and West. St. Chrysostom appealed to Pope Innocent the First. It should be remarked, that St. Athanasius mentions, (*Apol. ii.*) that his own appeal was previous to the decree of Sardica. In fine, Pope Gelasius, (*Ep. ad Dard.*) says, "*ad illam (ecclesiam Romanam) de qualibet mundi parte conones appellari voluerunt, ab illâ autem nemo est appellare permissus*."



that this was the rule of the church. During the great Arian controversy, which involved every thing in confusion, they could tell that those were right who believed with the bishop of Rome, and that those who differed from him were wrong. Indeed the conduct of the Arians themselves proclaimed it: while persecuting Athanasius, the great champion of the ancient faith, the Emperor Constantius, says Ammianus Marcellinus, was most anxious to have him condemned by the *authority which the bishop of Rome had over the rest.*\*

“As to the princes, the hierarchy of the kingdom of Christ, again and again they recognise, inculcate, and act upon, the principle, that sovereignty over the entire of that kingdom resides in the successors of Peter: that bishops, no matter what their dignity, or in what quarter of the world, whether in the East or in the West, should direct themselves for redress to the chair of Peter as their chief; and that, whereas an appeal lay to that see from every other decision of the church, there was no appeal from its decisions. Without its ratification no decree of any assembly in the church was valid, its decrees were inviolable, and he who should presume to act against them cut himself off from the communion of the church.

“And as if to display in the strongest light, that this authority came exclusively from on high, and that it in nowise depended on any human support, or stood in need of any favourable combination of circumstances to recommend it or prop it up, it is when all earthly power, that could be supposed to sustain or give it strength, is torn away and utterly annihilated, first by the withdrawal of the seat of empire from Rome, and finally by its utter destruction as we now behold it; then it is, precisely, and in exact propor-

It was after the two African synods against the Pelagians had been confirmed by the Pope, that St. Augustin uttered his celebrated words, “Rome has spoken, the cause is terminated—*Roma locuta est, causa finita est.*”

\* Lib. xv.

tion as the city where it is planted declined, and is eclipsed by the rising splendour of its imperial rival, that the see of Peter shines out with meridian effulgence, and is more and more enthusiastically hailed from all quarters. Nay, at this instant, when Rome as a city is no more, when all the provinces of the West are trodden down and weltering under the barbarian hoof, has not your own great emperor of the East—confirming the enactments of Theodosius the Great, and of other emperors—expressed it as his will, ‘that all things which relate to the church shall be submitted to the bishop of Rome as the head of all churches?’ Nor can you have forgotten the startling displays of this supremacy which so recently excited the ire of your imperial mistress, Theodora, when the intruder Anthimus, her favourite, was deposed by the feeble and exiled successor of the fisherman, and another instituted in his stead.

“Now, mark the evidence,” pursues St. Benedict, “that Heaven has set an insuperable bar to the success of what you meditate. It has placed these ruins under interdict; and every attempt to repair shall only add to their destruction; shall only rend and shatter them into smaller fragments, until at length, ‘like chaff of the summer-threshing floor, they are swept away by the wind.’ That the empire of the fisherman is identical with that described by the prophet is as evident as these ruins of the seven hills that lie prostrated, rent, and shattered to whatever side we turn.

“‘Thus thou sawest, O king,’ said Daniel, ‘till a ROCK was cut out of a mountain without hands, and it struck the statue upon the feet thereof that were of iron and of clay, and broke them in pieces.\* Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold (of this colossal image of empire) broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of a summer’s threshing floor, and they were carried away

\* Dan. ii. 31—44.

by the wind : and there was no place found for them. But the ROCK THAT STRUCK THE STATUE BECAME A GREAT MOUNTAIN, AND FILLED THE WHOLE EARTH.' And in interpreting this imagery, the prophet himself adds, that, it is 'the God of heaven himself who will set up this kingdom (represented by the Rock), that it never shall be destroyed, never delivered to another people ;' just as our Lord said to Simon, whom he surnamed a ROCK, 'that the gates of hell should never prevail against it.' 'It shall break in pieces, and shall consume all these (pagan) empires,' concludes the prophet. 'AND ITSELF SHALL STAND FOR EVER ;' agreeably to what the Messiah promised of his own empire which he confided to Peter, that 'He would be with it ALL DAYS, even to the consummation of the WORLD.'\*

"Behold, therefore, the decree set upon these ruins. As the conquests of Rome were made subservient to the propagation and permanent establishment of the Messiah's empire, upon the immense basis, and under the shadow, of a uniform government prepared by so many centuries of ambitious labour and enterprise ; so are the ruins of Roman grandeur to remain as testimonials to all ages and generations, 'that no flesh may glory in His sight ; but that as it is written : He that glorieth may glory in the Lord.' It is St. Paul that tells us this.† He says it was for this cause the Messiah refrained from establishing the kingdom himself. He ascended from Mount Olivet, bid adieu to the world—abandoning the godlike enterprise to 'the base things of the world and the things that are not'—that by their agency he might bring to nought the power and the pride of men and angels. 'Here,' said he, to the poor simple fisherman, so full of infirmities, 'here is the sceptre of my empire, I will build it upon thee, I make thee its viceroy to govern it with sovereign authority : go then, and as you love me, subdue the Roman empire, and force

\* Conclusion of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

† 1 Cor. i. 31.



the people, the senate, and the emperors to become my vassals and adorers.' You smiled, and no wonder, at the idea of the poor barefooted fisherman, with a reed in his hand and one meek disciple, marching against IMPERIAL ROME! Well, but the encounter between all that was most powerful and all that was weakest, between wisdom and foolishness—between the fisherman of Bethsaida and his successors, on one side, and the successors of Augustus, with the united forces of the world, on the other, *has* taken place; this war has been waged to the death, from century to century: is it not meet, is it not indispensable, that this battle-field before us, the scene of such a struggle, should remain to attest for ever on which side lay the victory? If these trophies be meddled with, how shall tongue of man or angel be ever able to tell, as *they* do, and convince posterity, of the power, wisdom, and divine magnificence, of Jesus Christ? 'Alleluia!' exclaimed St. Benedict, and his disciples joined him. 'Salvation, and glory, and power is to our God; for true and just are his judgments, who hath judged the great harlot which corrupted the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hands.'\*

"Equally vain shall be your efforts to dislodge the barbarians. It is not without a high design of Providence, that they are dispersed over the ancient provinces of Rome. They were due to them in compensation of their sires' wrongs. But that is not the chief reason they possess them. They also belong to the class, of whom he said, who made Peter his chief pastor: 'Other sheep I have who are not of this (the Jewish) fold, and them also it behoveth to bring in and gather, that there may be but one fold and one Shepherd.' In their trackless deserts and forest-

\* Apocal. ch. xix. 12. It appears from this chapter, that the triumph of Christianity over pagan Rome was celebrated with unbounded jubilee among the blessed in heaven. In it, also, they beheld the shadow of the Messiah's triumph over the world, on the great day of judgment.

homes, the barbarians were inaccessible: they were to be brought as neophytes to the threshold of the church, and prepared for conversion by the same empire, that had been already turned to so great an account in forwarding the gospel. Like eagles to a field of carnage, they were lured forth by the scent of the dying empire; they fell upon its mighty frame, and tore its limbs to pieces. See how they bleach and crumble on these memorable scenes. But, the destroyers became gradually tamed of their ferociousness, by contact with Christianity. They were in turn subdued by those whom they led into captivity. Even in his day, St. Jerome could boast, that some of the most inhuman of them had submitted to the mild influences of faith. The Armenian had laid down his quiver before the cross; the Hun had exchanged his war-song for penitential psalms; the Scandinavian had learned to glow with charity; and the migratory encampments of the Goths had become so many stations for the diffusion of Christianity.\* Although the barbarians who have already stationed themselves in the provinces, still 'fight against the Lamb'—reject the Divinity of Christ—'the Lamb shall conquer them.' Already they give token of submission, nor have their errors ever estranged them from a filial devotedness to St. Peter.† How often has this reverence displayed itself amidst the many fearful scenes that filled up the interval between Totila and Alaric? During all the horrors of sack and slaughter, whatever belonged to the apostles has been invariably held inviolate. Never has the bloody track of havoc or rapine crossed their threshold; their successors and

\* "Deposuit pharetras Armenius, Hunni discunt psalterium, Scythi æfrigora fervent calore fidei, Getarum rutilus et flavus exercitus ecclesiarum circumfert tentoria," &c.

† Their Arianism did not prevent either the Goths or Vandals from recognising the supremacy of the see of Peter: like all the ancient heretics, they were anxious to be considered members of the Catholic church, and on that account sought by every stratagem to obtain communion with Rome. We have seen Totila devoutly visit the tomb of St. Peter; Theodoric did the same.

lowliest ministers have been listened to with deferential respect, and have seldom failed in their intercession. Other armies of neophytes are upon their march from the deserts and fastnesses still more remote; the rude but burly materials of that grand social edifice about to be constructed, under the auspices of St. Peter, upon the site once occupied by the pagan empire of Rome. Ferocious they are in the extreme, sanguinary, brutalized, hideous monsters rather than men; nevertheless, they shall be humanized, reclaimed, exalted to the highest pitch of intellectual culture and of Christian perfection. The Spirit of God is again abroad, and ere long, the heavens shall rejoice to see CHRISTENDOM emerging from the chaos."

At this moment, Belisarius could not suppress an exclamation of wonder at the contrast between the aspect of the seven hills, which they had left, and the Vatican, where they had arrived. Indeed, it was manifest, that, already, the seat of empire had passed from the Capitol to the tomb of St. Peter. So religiously had his temple and all its precincts been respected during the various sieges and catastrophes of the city down to the last, that the solemn worship, and all the offices of religion, had gone on, as uninterruptedly and unmolested, as in times of the most profound peace. The free resort of pilgrims, and of all who had cause to visit the apostolic see, had never been interfered with. The Basilica of St. Paul and its environs had been similarly respected.\* The great Atrium with its colonnades had never been once invaded; the gilded dolphins continued to pour their limpid tributes into the basin of the great fountain

\* "Templum est Pauli apostoli, quod a mœnibus Romæ stadiis xiv. distat. Alluitur fluvio Tiberi, nullis septum operibus; quam, ab urbe pertinens ad templum hoc porticus, et vicina utrique ædificia, faciles negant ad locum aditus. Porro, Gothi sacram hanc Pauli ædem apostoli, itemque alteram Apostoli Petri sic reverentur ut neutram toto belli tempore, ne minimum quidem, violarint; at sacerdotibus de more sacra illic omnia procurare licuerit."—*Procop. de Bel. Goth.* l. ii. c. 4.

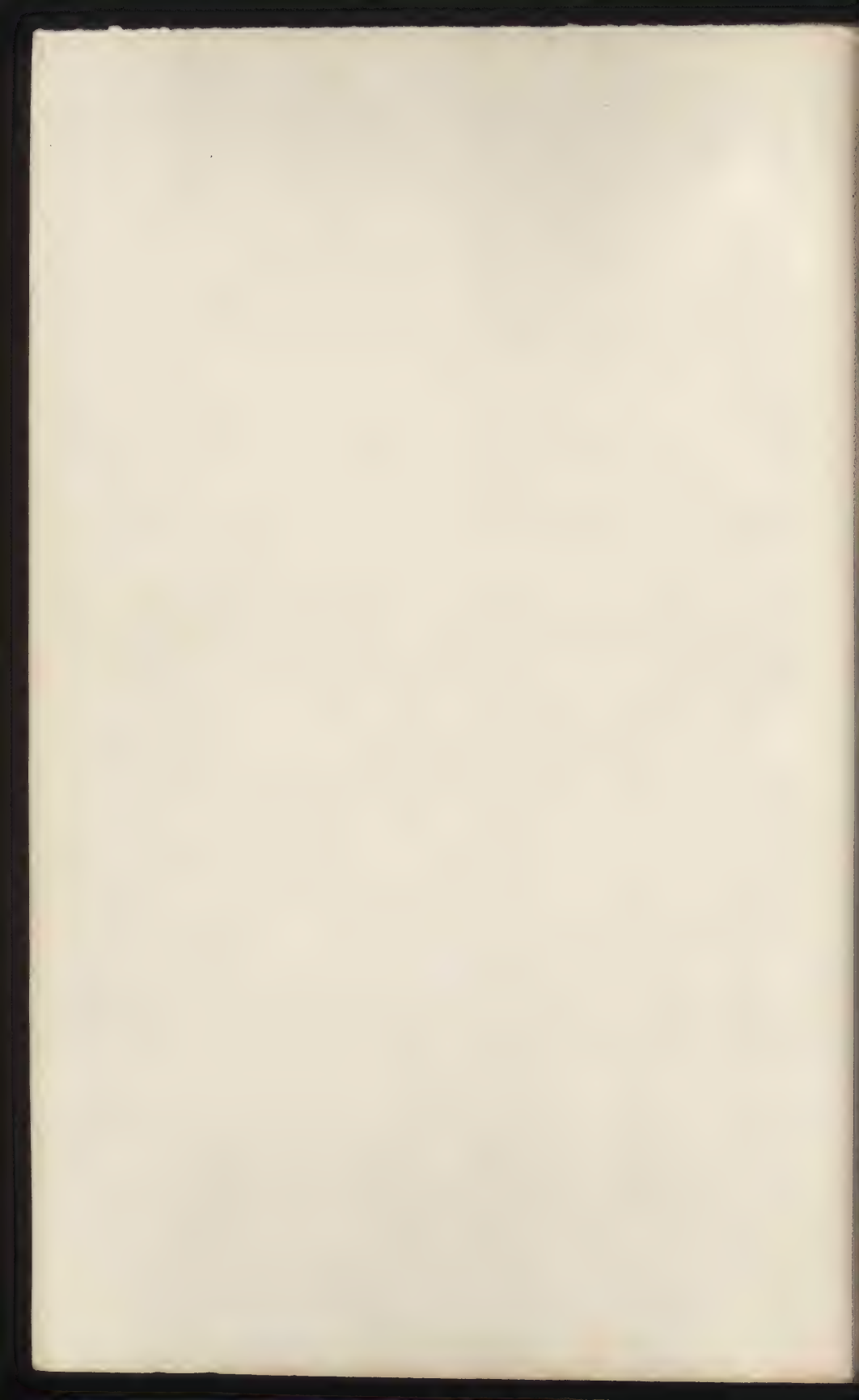


of the pilgrims, under the shade of the bronze tree of Cybele. Within the temple, the lamps and the pharoses of purest gold continued still to burn before the altars ; there was an odour of frankincense upon the atmosphere of the sanctuary ; and the whole aspect of the temple was as resplendent, as exempt from the soil of time, or the marks of violence, as on the day of its dedication. Belisarius could even discern his own bright donary still glittering upon the column where he had himself suspended it on his first entry into Rome.

The clergy, who had never retired from the temple of St. Peter and the precincts of the Vatican, were now advancing to receive him according to the prescriptions of the ritual ; but, just upon the sacred threshold, the blast of the trumpet smote upon his ear. He understood its note, too well, to need the tidings of the pale and panting fugitive, who told him the Goths were lying in ambuscade to intercept his return to the port ; but the warrior knelt to crave the blessing of St. Benedict, before he vaulted on his charger, and rode away back again, over the Campus Martius and through the ruins of the seven-hilled city, with his guards, to cut his way, sword in hand, through the opposing squadrons of the Goths.\*

\* "Protinus Barbari (Gothi) structis pro Româ insidijs, ut in propinquo apparuit Belisarius, insurrexerunt. Commisso acri certamine, virtute Romani suâ fuis hostibus et pluribus interfectis, statim Portum repetierunt."—*Procop. de Bel. Goth.* l. iii. c. 23.

BOOK VI.





## BOOK VI.

### CHAPTER I.

“Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,  
With jingling spurs the cloisters rung ;  
Soon by the chimney’s merry blaze  
Through the wide hostel might you gaze ;  
Might see where in the dark nook aloof,  
The rafters of the sooty roof  
Bore wealth of winter cheer.”—*Marmion*.

“The conquest of Britain reflects less glory on the name of Cæsar, than on that of Pope Gregory I.”—*Gibbon’s Hist. of the Dec. and Fall*, &c. chap. xlv.

In proportion as the winter storm grew more wild, howling round the abbey towers of St. Peter’s at Canterbury, and haunting its cloisters with ghostly echoes, the crowd of wayfarers, who had met with shelter and cordial hospitality from its inmates, appeared to enjoy with keener zest the warmth and mellow splendour of the pilgrims’ hall. Already they had been regaled with exhilarating and substantial cheer, and now, as they sat basking in the “merry blaze,” the hours from the “Ave Maria” until midnight were beguiled with various narratives of adventures, and of wonders, in many lands. They formed a motley company. The serf and the earl, the mitred abbot and the monk, the anchoret and the steel-clad baron, were blended in harmonious intercourse, and grouped together, in their brilliant and fantastic costumes, without the slightest appearance of assumption on the one side, or of repulsive arrogance on the other : chapmen, clerks, and needy palmers, were mingled, as guests of the church, with lordly prelates, and even with æthelings, and crowned monarchs of the heptarchy. In short, young

Christendom was represented in that convent hall. Missionaries returning from St. Gall, and Fulda, and Keisserswerd, from Corbie and Heidenheim, were met by others hastening to those outposts of Christianity : reinforcements drafted from the great depôts of Lis-more, and Lindisfarne, from Benchor, Iona, and Jarrow. Votaries, from beyond the Pyrenees and the Alps, commingled with those who had made the pilgrimage of the Holy Land, had visited the Jordan, and the mounts of Horeb and Ararat, and even seen the Pyramids. The atrocities of the Moors in Spain, and of the Saracens in the East, by turns afforded the matter of the most moving narratives : some described the hallowed scenery of Palestine, told how they had knelt in the holy places of Nazareth and Bethlehem, how they had sighed and wept in Gethsemane, and on Mount Calvary : while others contrasted, for the entertainment of a gayer throng of auditors, the courts of Charlemagne and the caliphs, with the gorgeous pageantry and splendour that characterised the sway of Irene, the Greek empress.

“ Here is a holy palmer come  
 From Salem first, and last from Rome ;  
 One that hath kiss'd the blessed tomb,  
 And visited each holy shrine  
 In Araby and Palestine :  
 On hills of Armenie hath been,  
 Where rest of Ark may yet be seen ;  
 By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,  
 Which parted at the prophet's rod :  
 In Sinai's wilderness he saw  
 The mount where Israel heard the law :  
 He shows St. James's cockle shell,  
 Of fair Montserrat too can tell,  
 And of the grot where olives nod,  
 Where, darling of each heart and eye,  
 From all the youth of Sicily  
 Saint Rosalie retired to God.”

How miraculous the change that had come over the spirit of the barbarian nations ! now, devoted with as vehement enthusiasm to piety, as they had been, for-

merly, to a rage for havoc and devastation. Without entirely quelling their impetuosity, religion had led them into new fields of enterprise. The impulse that had precipitated them on the decaying empire of paganism, for sake of plunder, now carried them as pilgrims, despite of hardships and a thousand dangers, to pour out their tears and burning vows in the most inhospitable and distant regions. Wherever the most ardent and lively faith could discern a footprint of the Redeemer or of his saints; every scene that had been hallowed by his Divine presence, by the preaching of his apostles, by the sufferings of his martyrs, or by the penitential tears and ruminations of devoted souls who had chosen the part of her "who had loved much:" thither were they borne by that necessity for change, for enterprise, for effort, and adventure, appendages of the old nomadic life that still clung to them, even in their religious state. But the most singular feature of the revolution was, that Rome, from being the grand object of hatred and hostility, had become the centre to which all the young nations felt themselves attracted, by the strongest emotions of love, gratitude, and veneration. Next to the crucifix suspended on his breast,

" St. Peter's keys, in cloth of red,  
On his broad shoulders wrought,"

were the emblems worn by the pilgrim with tenderest piety, and, so to speak, with greatest pride. To visit the tomb of the prince of the apostles, and receive his successor's blessing, it was not unusual for kings to forsake their thrones, for prelates to entrust to others the safeguard of their flocks, or for the nobles to suspend the chase, and the petty wars in which they almost equally delighted.\* All orders of the clergy,

\* We find repeated mention of the pilgrimages to Rome in the Saxon Chronicle: Ina, King of Wessex, who founded the monastery of Glastonbury, afterwards went to Rome, and continued there to the end of his life. Again, in the year 709, we read that Kenred



and the laity of every sex and degree, obeyed the same enthusiasm, and "father of strangers," from the paternal kindness with which these wanderers were received in Rome, had already become a title of the popes.\* They had long since succeeded in winning the filial allegiance of tribes that had cherished the most implacable aversion for the Roman name: through their missionaries, and by attracting them to the great centre of faith, and of ancient civilization, they were fast weaning them from the enormities of a savage nature, and initiating them, not only in the most sublime practices of Christianity, but also in the arts that humanize life, that adorn and crown it with felicity. "The Christian pilgrims," says a profound thinker, "meeting together in Rome from every country, brought back to their own land a kind of practical and personal conviction of all being children of one mother, so that afterwards, every one felt within himself an additional motive for desiring to avert discord, and whatever might interrupt the concord of the common family."† They likewise returned home enriched with useful knowledge, and the rudiments of domestic comfort, and national prosperity.

Advantages and obligations such as these had contributed, not a little, to strengthen and confirm that reverential devotedness with which neophyte Europe had been taught, by its preceptors in the science of

went to Rome, and Offa with him: and Kenred was there to the end of his life. Alfred sent pilgrims to Rome, and went there twice in person; Canute, also, went in person, and describes in his letter to the bishops and nation of England, the motives that induced him to make a pilgrimage to Rome. There went on this pilgrimage eight Saxon kings. See *Angl. Sax. Antiq.* p. 159.

"Make safe your journey by confession, and remember to guard it by alms," was the recommendation given to the pilgrim.—*Alcuini Epist.* xlvi. St. Anselm writes to his brother, Burgundius, who was going to Jerusalem:—"I advise and entreat you not to carry your sins with you, but get rid of them effectually by a general and exact confession of all your offences from your youth."—*S. Anselmi Epist.* lib. iii. 66.

\* *S. Hildegardi Epist.* i.

† "Spedaleri De' dretti dell' uomo."—*Lib.* v. 5.

salvation, to regard the successors of St. Peter; and first among their contemporaries, in this career of new born enthusiasm, were the tribes of the Anglo-Saxons. *They*, beyond all the rest, were distinguished for gratitude and filial attachment to the papal see; because, to papal zeal they were pre-eminently indebted for the light of the gospel, and for the blessings, temporal as well as eternal, that flowed from it upon their country, in such abundance.\*

The affecting incident that first inspired St. Gregory the Great with the project of converting the Anglo-Saxons, has been often told. The sight of some poor young captives about to be sold as slaves, as he was one day passing through the city to his convent, excited his liveliest compassion. He inquired from what country they came, and on being told that they were Angli, he said they deserved rather to be called Angeli—that is, to be named, not Angles, but Angels; and from that moment he resolved to spend his life in bringing a people so gifted by Heaven from the servitude of idols to a participation in the dignity and blessings of Christianity. Although he was at this time only a simple monk, his extraordinary virtues and endowments had so endeared him to the Romans, that on discovering his intention, and that he had left his convent, they pursued, and, having overtaken him when already advanced upon his journey, constrained him, notwithstanding all his efforts and entreaties to the contrary, to return to Rome again. But though thwarted thus by the ardent attachment of his fellow-citizens, and effectually debarred by his after elevation to the papacy from prosecuting the holy enterprise in person, he did not fail to confide it in due time to some of the most zealous and learned of his monastic disciples. His eloquence was exerted to communicate to their breast that charity for a noble, but benighted race, that had so long been burning in his own: he set before them a brilliant picture of the

\* Dr. Lingard's Anglo-Sax. Antiq. p. 97; London, 1810.

glory and never-ending rewards of the apostleship : when, even after all this, they faltered on their way, and, through terror of its perils and difficulties, implored to be dispensed from the undertaking, he exhorted, conjured, commanded them to proceed ; exerted all the high influence of the apostolic see, and of his own personal reputation, to smooth their path ; and never relaxed in his solicitude or exertions, until he had the consolation to see the mission not only prospering, but crowned with miraculous success.

On reaching the Isle of Thanet, where they first landed, the missionaries sent to apprise King Ethelbert, that they had come from Rome, and were the messengers of good tidings, of tidings that must infallibly secure the eternal joys of heaven, and a crown of never-ending glory to those who receive them with docility. After some days' delay, the king came in person to the island, and sent to inform the strangers that he was ready to receive their embassy. They are described by the venerable Bede as forming an august procession, as they advanced with the cross, and an image of the Saviour, embroidered on a standard, at their head : they chanted the Litanies in alternate choirs as they moved along, imploring the aid of Heaven upon their enterprise, and its choicest blessings upon the people to whom they came. The Kentish monarch received them under a spreading oak, and after listening attentively to St. Augustine, who, as chief of the apostolic embassy, announced to him the great message of salvation, informed them, that though for the present he was not inclined to abandon the deities of his country and his sires, he permitted them to preach their doctrines to his subjects. With anthems of praise, and supplicating Heaven to bless the country they were entering, they proceeded in the same order of procession, from Thanet to Canterbury, where Ethelbert had assigned an ancient church of St. Martin, built in the time of the Romans, for their abode. There they persevered in devout exercises, in



celebrating the Divine mysteries with great solemnity, in preaching to the multitudes, and in supplicating the Almighty with fasting and prayer for their conversion. These labours were so successful, that before the expiration of twelve months, the venerable pontiff who had so ardently prayed and exerted himself for the English, was filled with joy and consolation by the tidings, that King Ethelbert and more than ten thousand of his subjects had embraced the faith.\* His exertions and apostolical solicitude were now redoubled; his letters contributed to fortify the royal convert and his people in their holy purpose, to cheer and direct the missionaries; he supplied them with books and whatever else was required for the instruction of their neophytes, and the decorum of Divine worship, besides sending reinforcements to maintain what had been already gained, and still further to extend the conquests of the cross. From Kent, where it was first planted, that Divine symbol continued to advance from kingdom to kingdom, until the entire of the English, princes and people, were converted, after the innumerable hardships, labours, and trying sacrifices of ninety years. But that the difficulties that were to be surmounted in the introduction of the gospel, and the blessings resulting from it, may be the more easily and accurately comprehended, it may be of service to glance at the condition, social and religious, of the Anglo-Saxons at the landing of St. Augustine and his companions, as contrasted with their condition in both these respects, at the period when the scenes to be hereafter narrated took place in the pilgrims' hall.

"When the Saxons," says a modern writer,† "arrived at the English coast, they were amongst the most barbarous of the Germanic tribes. Unacquainted with the use of letters: savage in their habits: ignorant of the necessary arts of life, and

\* A. D. 597.

† S. A. Dunham, Esq., LL.D., &c., author of the *Histories of Spain and Portugal, of the Germanic Empire, &c. &c.*

despising all except that of war: with no desires except such as in their gratification were injurious to public or individual prosperity: acknowledging no law except individual will; and contemning more polished, because more feeble nations, they were in the truest sense of the word barbarians. Nor was their contact with the Britons likely to benefit them. The Britons were almost as rude as themselves: the last lingering traces of Roman civilization were almost faded away through the interminable wars which signalized the long decline of the empire; and even if the natives had been qualified to instruct their victors, an hostile spirit would for ever have kept the two people separate. To Christianity the Saxons were indebted not only for the ornamental, but for the useful arts of life: not only for literature, but for science. Without the instructions of the missionaries, and that intercourse with the civilized Continent which followed their conversion, they would have continued to live, like the wild beasts of the forest, the terror of their local habitations. Historians, with more prejudice than information, or, perhaps, with dishonesty superior to both, have not hesitated to condemn the labours and views of the Roman missionaries, have deplored the subversion of the ancient British church, and regarded the arrival of the strangers as in every respect portentous of evil to this island. The truth, however, is, that to the Roman missionaries our ancestors were indebted for every thing that improves life, for their hopes of immortality, for their greatness, probably for their existence as a nation. The effects of this moral revolution were indeed vast, but sufficiently explicable. Hitherto the only path of distinction lay in war: the use of arms, therefore, was the chief, almost the only branch of education; and with such intensity had it been cultivated that the "strife of spears" was loved even for its own sake, and the human feelings entirely forgotten. Hence the noblest faculties of our nature had lain dormant, until religion called them forth. She indicated to

the eye of ambition other fields than those of blood, other enjoyments than that of tossing the helpless infant on the point of the lance. By her precepts, by the preaching and examples of the missionaries, by intercommunication with the civilized states of France and Italy, the character of the people was soon elevated: not only religion, but intellectual knowledge began to be esteemed: in the cloister all that could be learned at that period was prosecuted with eager study; and in less than two centuries from the arrival of St. Augustine, England could boast of a higher degree of mental culture, than any other European country.”\*

The introduction of letters and of schools to diffuse the first rudiments of learning, was a portion of the instructions of St. Gregory to those whom he sent to found the gospel; but, for the pre-eminence to which they attained in literature and the sciences, the Anglo-Saxons were mainly indebted to Pope Vitalian.† He selected for the see of Canterbury, and for the abbey of St. Peter’s in the same city, two of the most accomplished scholars of their age: the one, Theodore, a native of Tarsus, in Cilicia, whom he appointed archbishop: the other, Abbot Adrian, was

\* Europe during the Middle Ages, vol. iv. ch. 3; Cab. Cycl., No. 58.

† Those whose theory it is, to regard the Roman Catholic church as the Beast of the Apocalypse, have been induced, through a very natural inclination to fortify their position by every thing in the shape of argument, to fix the sending of Archbishop Theodore by the Pope, in the portentous year 666. It is a pity his Holiness did not postpone his compliance with the request of the kings of Northumbria and Kent for one year longer, for *then*, indeed, the coincidence, between the date of this disaster, and the number of the Beast, would have been exact. In his reply to the letters and embassy of King Oswey, Pope Vitalian, amongst many other things in a similar strain, uses the following exhortation, in which it is not easy for any but saints, to detect the style of antichrist: “Festinet igitur quæsumus, vestra celsitudo, ut aptamus, totam insulam suam Deo Christo dicare: habet enim profecto protectorem humani generis Redemptorem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, qui ei cuncta prospera impertiet, ut novum Christi populum coacervet, Catholicam ibi et Apostolicam constituens fidem.”—*Vid. Bedæ, Hist. Eccl.* l. iii, c. 29.



by birth an African, and both were perfect masters of the Greek and Latin languages, and eminently versed in the entire circle of the sciences as they were then known. Ere long the palace of Archbishop Theodore, and the monastery of Abbot Adrian, became normal schools for all the kingdoms of the heptarchy. The fire of emulation which they enkindled soon illuminated the entire land, extending its humanizing influence from the cloisters to the fortress-castles of the nobility, and to the courts of the royal princes. Even the Anglo-Saxon ladies became inflamed with the general enthusiasm for letters; and their accomplishments and classic taste may well excite the surprise, if not the envy, of their fair descendants of the present age. "They conversed with their absent friends," says Dr. Lingard, "in the language of ancient Rome; and frequently exchanged the labours of the distaff and the needle (in which they excelled), for the more pleasing and more elegant beauties of the Latin poets." In the account that has come down to us of the last days of venerable Bede, we have a lively and touching illustration of the ardour with which learning was sought for by the pupils, and inculcated by the professors of the Anglo-Saxon schools.

"He was attacked with great difficulty of breathing," says St. Cuthbert, "yet without pain, a few weeks before Easter.\* Yet afterwards he was joyful and merry, giving thanks to God day and night, nay, hourly, until Ascension-day arrived. Daily he gave lessons to us his disciples, and the residue of each day he passed in the singing of psalms. The whole night, except when a little slumber intervened, he watched, always joyful, always praising God. If sleep a moment overtook him, he did not fail, on rousing, to resume his wonted devotions, and with outstretched hands to utter his gratitude to Heaven. O blessed man! Often did he repeat that saying of the Apostle Paul, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of

\* A. D. 735.

the living God!’ and many other passages of Scripture, all fitted to rouse us from the sleep of our minds, and to impress us with our last end. And some things also he spoke in our own, the English language, for he was well versed in our songs; and, putting his thoughts into English verse, he feelingly said: ‘For so necessary a journey, no man can be too prudent; none can reflect too much on the good or evil he has done; nor can be too solicitous about the judgment which after his death his spirit must receive.’ According to our custom and his, he sang the antiphonies, of which one is, ‘O King of glory, Lord of virtues, who on this day didst triumphantly ascend to heaven, leave us not orphans, but send us the promise of the Father, the Spirit of truth, hallelujah!’ And when he came to the words, ‘leave us not orphans,’ he burst into tears; and wept much, and seeing this we wept with him. Again we read, again we wept; indeed we always wept. In such godly employment we passed the quinquagesimal days, until the day before mentioned (Ascension,) he rejoicing and thanking God that he was thus afflicted. For he often repeated: ‘God scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;’ with many other passages from Scripture. And he repeated the saying of St. Ambrose, ‘Non sic vixi ut me pudeat inter vos vivere; sed nec mori timeo, quia bonum Dominum habemus.’ And during this time he was occupied not only in teaching us, but on two works which well deserve to be remembered: the first was the Gospel of St. John, which he had translated into English, for the benefit of the church, as far as that passage; ‘But what are they among so many?’\* The other consisted of extracts from the book of Bishop Isidore. ‘I do not wish my disciples to read lies, that after my death they should labour in vain.’ On the arrival of the third feria before the Ascension, his breathing became more painful, and a little swelling appeared in his feet. Yet, for all that he taught and dictated with cheerfulness, sometimes

\* Chap. vi. ver. 9.

observing, 'Learn quickly; for I know not how long I may live; how soon my Maker may call me.' To us it seemed as if he well knew his approaching end. The next night he passed watching and giving thanks. And on the morning, which was the fourth feria, he told us diligently to continue what we had begun. And this being done, we walked, as the custom of the day required, until the third hour, with the relics of the saints. But one of us remained with him, and said to him, 'Dear master, one little chapter yet remains, will it not pain you to be asked any more questions?' 'No; take thy pen, prepare it, and write quickly.' And this he did. And at the ninth hour the master said unto me, 'I have some precious things in my little chest, some pepper, orarias,\* and incense; run quickly and bring the presbyters of our monastery, and I will distribute among them what God has given me. The rich men of this world delight to make presents of gold, silver, and other precious things; I also with much affection and joy will give to my brethren the gifts which I have received from Heaven.' And he addressed every one by name, beseeching and admonishing them to say masses, and to pray for him, which they willingly promised. And they all mourned and wept, when he said that they should see his face no more in this world; but they rejoiced in that he said, 'The time is come when I must return to Him who created me out of nothing! Long have I lived; well my merciful Judge foresaw the tenor of my life. The time of my departure is at hand; I long to be dissolved, and to be with Christ!' These and many other words he spoke with much cheerfulness. And when it drew towards evening, the youth before mentioned, said, 'Dear master, one sentence yet remains.' 'Write it quickly,' was the reply. Immediately afterwards, the youth observed, 'It is now finished.' He rejoined, 'Well and truly hast

\* "*Oraria*. Orarium, ab orâ pro extremitate vestium derivatur; limbus qui apponitur oræ, causâ ornatûs." Again, "*orarium*, sudorium quo os abstergitur."—*Ducange, ad verb.*



thou spoke; it *is* finished. Now take my head in thine hands, and turn me towards the holy place where I was wont to pray, that sitting I may call on my Father.' Wherefore, being laid on the floor of the cell, he chanted 'Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.' And no sooner had he repeated the concluding words, 'Spiritui Sancto,' than his soul winged its flight to the celestial kingdom. All who witnessed the death of this blessed father, said that they had never seen any other man end life with such devotion and tranquillity."\*

The means of diffusing and perpetuating knowledge thus assiduously cherished, were amply provided by the labours of the monks, who, from the times of St. Gregory the Great, were usually employed in transcribing manuscripts for some hours every day.

But it was not alone for mere intellectual advantages and enjoyments that the English were indebted to the introduction of Christianity. It brought in its train all those humbler arts that are so indispensable to the well-being of society, as well as those that exalt and embellish the human character. The trades of the ironsmith, the joiner, and of those who worked in the precious metals, were held in such high repute among the monastic orders, that it was considered honourable for the highest dignitaries, not only to patronize, but occasionally to ennoble them, by practising them with their own hands. In the female communities, the labours of the distaff and the loom were plied with well regulated assiduity; and, in needlework and the art of embroidery, the nuns of those ages attained a skill that has left the specimens of their works that have survived unrivalled for elegance, even to the present

\* Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, l. v. c. 24. *Epistola Cuthberti* (apud Simeonem Dunelmensem, *Historia de Ecclesia Dunel.* l. i. c. 15; vide cap. 8. 14, ejusdem libri.) Bollandistæ, *Acta Sanctorum*, Die Maii xxvii. Mabillon, *Acta SS. Ord. S. Ben. Sæculum* iii. pars i. p. 534, &c. Vid. sex *Epistolas S. Bonifacii*, necnon *Beati Alcuini*, et *Concilium* iii. *Aquisgranense*, *Præfatio ad lib. iii. Dunham*, ubi supra.

day. But it was the superior knowledge and persevering industry of the monks as agriculturists, that contributed more than everything else to beautify the aspect of the whole country, and to enrich the population with an abundance of those substantial comforts, to which they had been, theretofore, almost total strangers. Some of the fairest and most fertile tracts of England were originally reclaimed from the desert and the morass by the self-devotedness, especially, of the Benedictine monks. Through a spirit of mortification and a love of solitude, they usually preferred the most desolate and sequestered districts, and such as seemed to hold out the least hope of a return for the expenditure of fatigue. But labouring, as they did, through a spirit of penance and divine charity, they speedily effected what to the *theowas*, or slave-labourers, of the lay-proprietors, must have ever remained impossibilities; and, in addition to the spontaneous enthusiasm with which as servants of Christ and of his needy members they applied themselves to toil, the monastic orders possessed immense advantages, in those agricultural traditions of the ancient Romans, which were cherished in the rural fraternities of St. Benedict, long after they had been forgotten and lost everywhere else. They cleared the forests, drained the fenny regions, constructed roads and embankments, erected mills and bridges; and never hesitated to attempt whatever improvement it was not impossible for the most devoted industry to accomplish. The least favoured regions of the island became the scenes of smiling plenty; the verdant meadow, and rich pasture lands, extended where the stagnant waters of the marsh used before to engender pestilence: and fragrant herbage and many tinted flowers seemed to spring up and flourish, wherever religion passed through the land upon her errands of benediction.\*

\* The coast of Northumbria was cultivated by the monks of Coldingham, Lindisfarne, Bambrough, Tinmouth, Jarow, Weremouth, Hartpool, and Whitby: the marshes of the Gervii were drained and improved by the monks of Croyland, Thorney,

In architecture, as in letters, the first impulse was given by St. Austin and his companions, who substituted a rough but solid masonry for the walls of mud or timber, the only materials used before that period by the Angles even in their temples ; but still there was no very great advance until the Saxon pilgrims, in their frequent visits to the tombs of the apostles, had become impressed with the miserable inferiority of their own churches, whose white-washed walls and windows without glass had, before, excited their admiration. St. Wilfrid and St. Bennet Biscop, the great improvers of Saxon architecture, made several pilgrimages to Rome, (the former three or four, the latter no less than five,) and never did they return without a rich importation of manuscripts, chalices, various utensils, vestments, and ornaments for the altar ; besides statues and pictures to adorn the temples, which their observation of the Roman and continental structures had enabled them to erect. In these new structures, they exhibited to their admiring countrymen all the wonders of cut stone walls and towers, lead roofs and glass windows, with sundry other astonishing improvements, “juxta Romanorûm morem.” And it may be well imagined, that not the least attractive of these novelties were the creations of the Italian or Grecian pencil. With these they adorned the sacred edifices, “that all who entered them, even the illiterate,” to use St. Benet’s own expressions, “might be led to salutary reflections by the sight of their Saviour’s image and those of his

Ely, Ramsey, and Medhamstead. This fenny region, the theatre of monastic industry, extended the space of 68 miles, from the borders of Suffolk to Wainfleet in Lincolnshire. (Camden’s Cambridgeshire.) After the lapse of so many centuries, there is reason to fear, that a very considerable part of it will be again lost to cultivation, by repeated inundations. In the years 1795, 1799, and 1800, about 140,000 acres were under water. “Two or three more floods,” says Mr. Young, “will complete the ruin ; and 300,000 acres of the richest land in Great Britain will revert to their ancient proprietors, the frogs, the coots, and the wild ducks of the region.”—*Annals of Agricult.* 1804. See Dr. Lingard’s Ang.-Sax. Antiq. p. 145.



saints : by the scene of the nativity, of the last judgment, or by the other sacred subjects which meet their gaze to whatsoever side they turn.”\*

“The interior of these edifices,” says Dr. Lingard, “exhibited an equal spirit of improvement, and a superior display of magnificence. Of the spoils which their barbarous ancestors had wrested from a more polished people, a considerable portion was now dedicated to the service of the Deity ; and the plate and jewels, which their piety poured into the treasuries of the principal churches, are represented of such immense value, that it is with reluctance we assent to the testimony of contemporary and faithful historians. From them we learn, that on the more solemn festivals every vessel employed in the sacred ministry was of gold or silver ; that the altars sparkled with jewels and ornaments of the precious metals ; that the vestments of the priest and his assistants were made of silk, embroidered in the most gorgeous manner ; and that the walls were hung with foreign paintings and the richest tapestries.”† In the church of York stood two altars, entirely covered with plates of gold and silver, one of them was also ornamented with a profusion of gems, and supported a lofty crucifix of equal value. Above were suspended three ranges of lamps in a pharus of the largest dimensions. Even the books employed in the offices of religion were decorated with similar magnificence. St. Wilfrid ordered the four gospels to be written on a purple ground with letters of gold, in which were enchased a number of precious stones.

Nor were the Anglo-Saxons content to sit down and enjoy themselves amidst so many spiritual and

\* “Ut intrantes ecclesiam omnes etiam literarum ignari, quaquaversum intenderent, vel semper amabilem Christi sanctorumque ejus, quamvis in imagine, contemplarentur aspectum ; vel dominicæ incarnationis, gratiam vigilantiori mente recolent ; vel extremi discrimen examinis, quasi coram oculis habentes, districtius se ipsi examinare meminissent,” &c.

† Ang.-Sax. Antiq.

temporal advantages. The Divine spirit of Christianity had flowed in upon their hearts from too pure a fountain, and had penetrated too deeply not to give birth, in due season, to a kindred zeal to communicate the hopes of salvation, and the happiness of loving and serving their Redeemer, to their fellow-creatures, still aliens from the gospel. The Irish had already preceded them in labouring for its diffusion.

Magnificent, and worthy of sempiternal admiration and gratitude, are the ways of that Providence which directed the steps of St. Patrick to a sequestered island, at a time when the Roman empire was tottering though still erect, in order that, there, might be preserved and fostered, the Divine fire by which learning and religion were to be enkindled in so many countries, where they never yet had shone, or where they were to be crushed, and all but extinguished by the ruin that was impending. From his great monastery in Iona, the celestial illumination was diffused by St. Columba over all the surrounding islands, and through the wildest recesses of the Grampian mountains. One of his disciples, St. Aidan, evangelized the Northumbrians, and was the founder and first bishop of Lindisfarne. While St. Columba was labouring in the north of Britain, St. Columbanus, "the most remarkable character of his age," had taken to the continent. Upon the confines of Lorraine and Burgundy, he founded in the vast deserts of the Vosges the celebrated monastic colonies of Luxeuil and Fontaines: when compelled by persecution to retire from Austrasia, he and his disciples preached through Switzerland, and having established St. Gall in a monastery near the lake of Zurich, he penetrated into Lombardy through the mountains, overturning the altars of Woden, as he proceeded along with his disciples, and converting multitudes of the barbarian idolaters. He finally established his abode not far from the Trebia: and the great abbey of Bobbio, which he built among the highest mountains of the Apennines, and which exists to the present day, continued to flourish as a

famous seat of learning and piety. It deserves to be looked upon as one of the chief polytechnic schools of the middle ages. The sanctity and apostolical conquests of St. Gall acquired for him the title of the apostle of the Allemanian nation. Another disciple of St. Columbanus, St. Deicola, was the founder of Luthra, endowed with large grants of land by Clothair II. The hermitage of St. Fiacre became a place of pilgrimage, and so continued. St. Fursa, after preaching among the East Angles, and converting many from paganism, passed over into France, and long continued to make incursions on the territories of crime and darkness, from his monastery of Lagny, near the river Marne. In Brabant, his brothers, Ultan and Foillan, founded an establishment which was long called the monastery of the Irish. The character of its studies may be conjectured from the specimens of composition left behind him by St. Livinus, perhaps the most elegant poet and accomplished scholar of his day ; after labouring in Belgium and the Low Countries, he at length was crowned with martyrdom. " In the same spirit," says Moore, " we find St. Fridolin, surnamed the Traveller, exploring the Rhine for some uninhabited island, and at length fixing himself upon Seckingen, built there a church and convent for females, which he lived to see in a flourishing condition. Next to the generous devotion of these holy adventurers, thus traversing the land of the infidel and the stranger, the feeling of gratitude with which after ages have clung to their names, forms one of the most pleasing topics of reflection which history affords ; and few, if any, of our Irish missionaries left behind them more grateful recollections than, for centuries, consecrated every step of the course of Fridolin the Traveller, through Lorraine, Alsace, Germany, and Switzerland."\*

It is highly probable that, on the return of Prince Dagobert to Austrasia, he had been accompanied or followed thither from Ireland, by some of those eminent

\* Moore, vol. i. p. 280.



scholars, who had, during his stay there, presided over his studies ; for we find him, on his subsequent accession to the throne, extending his notice and patronage to two distinguished natives of Ireland, St. Arbogast and St. Florentius, the former of whom, having resided for some time in retirement at Alsace, was by Dagobert appointed Bishop of Strasburg ; and, on his death, a few years after, his friend and countryman, Florentius, became his successor. The tombs of two brothers, Erard and Albert, both distinguished saints of this period, were long shown at Ratisbon ; and St. Wiro, who is said to have been a native of the county Clare, rose to such eminence by his sanctity, that Pepin of Heristal, the mighty ruler and father of kings, selected him for his spiritual director, and was accustomed, as we are told, to confess to him barefoot. The labours of St. Kilian acquired for him the title of the apostle of Franconia. Having gone on a pilgrimage to Rome, another accomplished Irishman, Donatus, was induced to fix himself in Italy, and became soon after bishop of Fiesole ; and the gratitude of his scholars has immortalized the name of St. Cataldus, who carried, even to Tarentum, the sacred lore with which he had stored his mind in the schools of his native country.\*

No sooner were the Anglo-Saxons well initiated in Christianity than they became inspired with the same zeal as the Irish, and proved equally successful in foreign missions. The north of Germany, inhabited by kindred tribes, presented an ample field to their exertions ; the merit of rescuing them from idolatry and barbarism inflamed their ardour ; and, with such intrepidity and perseverance did they devote their abilities, fortunes, and lives to the pious enterprise, that they succeeded, under the auspices of successive pontiffs, not only in diffusing the light of the gospel over the vast regions of Ancient Germany, but in transplanting among the most savage tribes the litera-

\* Moore, p. 286—288.

ture, sciences, and arts, which we have seen themselves deriving from the missionaries of Rome.

The first to lead his countrymen into this, as into every other great and holy enterprise, was St. Wilfrid, whose preaching converted great numbers of the Frisians. However, as it was only during his first exile from the see of York, and when on his way to prosecute the appeal for his restoration before the Pope, that he laboured in this field, his preaching must be ascribed rather to fortunate accident, than to any systematic plan. The merit of establishing the Anglo-Saxon missions on a permanent and orderly footing must be allotted to Egbert, a native of Northumbria. Like multitudes of other noble youths of England, having resorted to Ireland for the sake of study, he became so attached to that country and its inhabitants, that he gladly relinquished all idea of ever returning to his own most turbulent and distracted home. His application was unwearied. He soon became celebrated as a great master, and saw himself surrounded by several of his youthful compatriots as devoted to learning and piety as himself. It was then, he first conceived the design of diffusing the light of the gospel through the north of Germany, and with this view selected for his associates the most learned and zealous of his hearers. Circumstances, however, prevented him from embarking personally in the holy enterprise; but his disciples laboured with great success, not only among the Frisians, but among the neighbouring tribes, as far as Denmark, under the direction of St. Willibrord, who was consecrated by Pope Sergius, and directed to fix his metropolitan see at Utrecht.

Of the Anglo-Saxons associated to St. Willibrord, the names of several are renowned in history. The Boructuarii, who inhabited the present duchy of Berg and the county of Mark, were evangelized by St. Swibert; and when driven thence by a furious irruption of the pagan Saxons, he retired to the island of Keisserswerdt, on which he built a monastery, and

from whence he occasionally made excursions to instruct the remaining inhabitants. Adelbert, a prince of the royal race of Northumbria, chose the north of Holland for the exercise of his zeal ; the pagans listened with docility to his instructions ; and his memory was long held in veneration by the inhabitants of Egmond, the place of his residence and death. Two other disciples of Egbert, brothers, of the name of Ewald, proceeded to the territories of the old Saxons, but were martyred by that most cruel and incorrigible of the Germanic tribes. By Pepin of Heristal, their bodies were honoured with a magnificent funeral at Cologne ; by the Anglo-Saxon church their names were immediately enrolled in the martyrology.\* The Batavi, who dwelt on the island formed by the Rhine and the Wahal, owed their conversion to the instructions of Werenfrid. Wiro, Plechelm, and Otger, devoted themselves to the inhabitants of Gueldres. Their principal residence was in the neighbourhood of Ruremond.†

But of these Christian adventurers, the most eminent for the extent of his conquests and the important commissions with which he was intrusted by the holy see, was Winfrid, born at Crediton, in Devonshire, but better known by the name of Boniface, given him by Pope Gregory II., when, on his second visit to Rome, he consecrated him bishop, that he might the better prosecute his apostolical labours, already crowned with extraordinary success. Thrice he visited the tombs of the apostles. First, when with several of his young companions he came, bearing commendatory letters from his diocesan, to supplicate at the feet of the supreme pontiff, to be sent to convert the pagans. Secondly, when the fame of his successes in Hesse, Saxony, and Thuringia, caused him to be summoned back to Rome to receive the

\* Ann. 692 ; Bed. l. v. c. 11 ; Lingard, p. 443.

† Dr. Lanigan, ch. xviii., note 105, says, that in the poem (erroneously attributed to Alcuin) upon which Dr. Lingard founds the Anglo-Saxon claim to *Wiro*, there is not "a word about that Wiro."



episcopal consecration: and lastly, when in his old age, and covered with glory, he came to give an account of his mission to Pope Gregory III. Again, after this he returned to his apostolical career with redoubled zeal, not only to extend the frontiers of Christ's kingdom, but, as legate of the Pope, to rekindle zeal, and enforce the observance of canonical discipline in its most ancient provinces.

The first care of the missionary, after he had received the episcopal consecration, was to increase the number of his associates. In a circular letter addressed to the bishops and principal abbots in England, he painted in lively colours the wants of the missions, and exhorted his countrymen to assist him in liberating the souls of their fellow-creatures from the yoke of ignorance and paganism. His exhortations were read with congenial sentiments by the more fervent of the monks and clergy: the merit of converting the infidels, and the hope of obtaining the crown of martyrdom, taught them to despise the dangers and difficulties of the enterprise; and many zealous missionaries successively crossed the sea, and placed themselves at the disposal of the new apostle. No motives but those of the purest zeal could have supported them under the numerous privations and dangers to which they were continually exposed. Bread, indeed, they were able to obtain from the gratitude of their proselytes, and the menaces of the Franks protected them from the insults of the vanquished barbarians who refused to listen to their doctrine; but, for clothing and almost every other necessary, they were compelled to depend on the casual benevolence of their distant friends. The fruits of their labours were frequently destroyed, and their lives endangered by the hostility of the tribes, that still retained the religion and independence of their fathers. By one incursion, no less than thirty churches were levelled with the ground.\*

\* St. Bonif. Ep. 91, 92. in Dr. Lingard's *Angl.-Sax. Antiq.*

The next object of the archbishop was to ensure a permanent supply of missionaries. With this view he erected several monasteries, and exhorted his associates to copy his example, in their different districts. His first foundation was the small cell of Ordof; this was followed by the larger monasteries of Fritzler and Amelburg; and to them succeeded the rich and magnificent abbey of Fulda. An extensive forest, known by the name of Buchow, lay in the midst of Franconia, Hesse, Wetteravia, and Thuringia. Through it ran the river Fuld, on the banks of which Boniface discovered a spot adapted, in his opinion, to the purposes of a monastic life. A grant of the place was readily obtained from the piety of Carloman, the son of Pepin; Sturm, his beloved disciple, with seven associates, cleared the wood, and erected the necessary buildings; and Boniface himself taught them the strict rule of St. Benedict. The abbey, placed under papal protection by its founder, continued to flourish long after his death. Within the space of a few years it contained four hundred monks, and continued to diffuse the light of literature and piety over the surrounding countries long after, not only Lindisfarne and Jarrow, but even Canterbury itself had been made desolate by the ravages of the Danes.\*

For the education of the female sex, Boniface solicited the assistance of Tetta, the abbess of Winburn; and Lioba, with several of the sisters, devoted themselves to so meritorious an attempt. To these he afterwards joined several other English ladies, who were animated with similar views, and equally desirous to partake in the merit of the missionaries. Lioba was placed in the convent of Bischofesheim, on the Tuber; Tecla, at Chitzingen, in Franconia; Walpurge, at Heidenheim, near the Brentz; and Chuniild and Chunitrude were sent, the former to Thuringia, and the latter into Bavaria.

\* "Till its late secularization, the superior of Fulda was a prince of the empire, and styled himself primate of all the abbots of Gaul and Germany."—*Lingard*, p. 450.

As Boniface advanced in age, he found himself unequal to the administration of so extensive a diocese. With the permission of the pontiff, and the consent of Carloman, he established four episcopal sees at Erford, Buraburg, Aichstad, and Wurtzburg; and intrusted them to the care of four of the most zealous among his associates, Adelhard, Wintan, Willibald, and Burchard.\*

Nor was it alone to the nations converted by his preaching that his pastoral solicitude was directed. In quality of apostolical legate, he visited Bavaria, and was received by the Duke Odilo with respect and kindness. The Bavarian church was then governed by Vivilo, a prelate ordained for that mission by the sovereign pontiff. Boniface judged that a greater number of pastors was necessary to accelerate the progress of the gospel, and divided the country into four smaller dioceses. Vivilo was obliged to content himself with the bishoprick of Passau; John, an Anglo-Saxon, was ordained for that of Saltzburg; and Goibald and Erembert were placed in the churches of Ratisbon and Frezezen.†

During the wretched state of vassalage into which the hierarchy had fallen under the depraved and wicked race of the Merovingian monarchs, disorders the most lamentable had crept into the church of France, and were aggravated to the last excess by the sacrilegious usurpations of Charles Martel. In the *Spicilegium* of Dachery, we have a touching account from a contemporary monk, of the change which had taken place in the celebrated abbey of Fontenelle. The substance which, in former centuries, was expended in hospitality, and in the support of literary men, was now applied to the maintenance of dogs and horses, and to the equipment of warriors: the song of praise was superseded by the barking of quadrupeds, or the clang of armour. Not only monasteries, but the most important sees were bestowed on avaricious laymen and dis-

\* Dr. Lingard, *Anglo-Sax. Antiq.* p. 450.

† Ibid.



solute ecclesiastics—to whoever in short was the best bidder. According to the report of the legate to Pope Zachary, (from which we learn these particulars,) episcopal synods had ceased for upwards of eighty years; the regulations of the canons were openly infringed, the highest dignities of the church were usurped by the powerful and rapacious laymen; and the clerical and monastic bodies were ignorant of the duties of their profession. In pursuance of the directions of the pontiff,\* and aided by Carloman, St. Boniface assembled a council,† but in what town of Austrasia is uncertain. Pepin le Bef imitated the zeal of his brother; a synod of three-and-twenty bishops assembled at Soissons; and by the untiring zeal and great experience of the legate, the most salutary reforms were effected.

Thus it was that the Holy See, and Christendom at large, were nobly requited by the Anglo-Saxons for the blessing of conversion. The career of St. Boniface, one of the most glorious and devoted legates by whom the supreme vicars of Christ were ever served, was ultimately crowned with martyrdom; but there was an imperishable vitality in his works. The see of Mentz continued to be illustrated by his virtues in the person of his favourite disciple, St. Lullus, whom he was permitted, as an extraordinary favour, to appoint his successor before departing on the mission to Frisia where he met his death; and his monks of Fulda, and the other monasteries continued for centuries afterwards, not only to uphold the cause of learning and discipline, but to push the conquests of the gospel not only to its shores, but even beyond the Baltic.‡

\* Zach. Ep. i. tom. vi. p. 1498.

† A. D. 742.

‡ “No man ever exceeded Boniface in devotion to the court of Rome, which he certainly regarded as the abode of Christ’s vicar on earth, and to which the church universal was divinely subjected. The oath which he took of fidelity to it, on his elevation to the archbishopric of Mentz, might have been dictated by Bellarmine himself: and in the councils over which he presided, he caused the duty of receiving the pallium from Rome, and the propriety of the

But the benefits conferred on continental Europe by the Saxons and Irish did not end here. The causes have been already hinted at, by which France had been involved in demoralization and ignorance,—the execrable despotism and profligacy of the Merovingians, followed out by the rapine and secularization of the church by Charles Martel. The Lombard invasion, to crown the calamities which it brought on Italy, had destroyed the ancient seats of learning, and established ignorance everywhere it spread. Except in Rome—preserved by a miracle from these barbarians—and in the British islands, letters were well nigh extinguished all over Europe. But when Charlemagne had succeeded in repelling the fresh torrents of invasion from the south and north-east, and had established an effective and uniform government throughout his various kingdoms, he set about the revival of learning. Finding no sufficient labourers in France, he hired them from foreign countries; Ireland supplied him with professors for the universities of Paris, Pavia, Bologna, and other seats of instruction; but of all who co-operated in this great enterprise for the improvement of Christendom, no one acquired such enduring renown as Alcuin. He was skilful in Greek as well as Latin, and conversant with all the sciences which he had learned under Egbert, archbishop of York, and of which he gives us this catalogue: “Grammar, rhetoric, jurisprudence, poetry, astronomy, natural history, mathematics, chronology, and the explication of the Scriptures.”

In 780 he was sent by his metropolitan to Rome to obtain the pallium; and in this journey it was that he came under the notice of Charlemagne, who, having collected the most able professors in all branches, not even excepting skilful singers, brought them with him from Italy into France. “From this

papal intervention in the internal affairs of each diocese, to be formally recognised.”—*Dunham, Europe during the Middle Ages*, vol. ii. p. 198; *Lardner's Cycl.*, No. 49.

period he was the confidant, the adviser, the doctor, and if we may thus speak, the intellectual premier of the great prince."\* Now, in his old age he had come to his native country, which he always loved, being sent on an embassy by the great Charlemagne to one of the English heptarchs: and, even in an aggregate of so many extraordinary and interesting characters as were brought together round the ample hearth, that radiated comfort through the pilgrims' hall, it was not wondered at by any one, that Alcuin should form the great object of curiosity and admiration. There, as in some great mart where merchants of many countries meet for exchange and traffic, the guests, and their kind-hearted entertainers the monks, commuted their welcome and cordial offices of hospitality for descriptive stories, for relics from Rome, Compostella, and the Holy Land. But every other object of inquiry was forgotten, in the eagerness with which they all prepared themselves to listen to the letters which Eginard, the secretary of Charlemagne, had written to Alcuin, his venerated preceptor and friend, concerning the coronation of his royal master in Rome, on the preceding Christmas day.

\* M. Guizot.



## CHAPTER II.

"Emperors and princes were there, and mitred fathers, and whole hosts wrapped up in sable weeds ; nor were wanting the ideal comrades of our youth, steel-clad knights, and gentle poets of the bower and hall ; grave magistrates also followed amidst a throng of citizens and peasants."—*Ages of Faith*, book v. ch. i.\*

"CHARLEMAGNE was at Padreborn with his armies, when he had advice that Pope Leo was on his way across the Alps to visit him. On the instant, the archbishop of Cologne was sent forward by the king, at the head of an august procession of prelates and noble paladins, to bid the Holy Father welcome ; and, soon after he dismissed his eldest son Pepin, king of Italy, with a warlike train of barons and valiant knights. But vast multitudes collecting from far and near, did joyfully hail the pontiff as he came along—gazing on the successor of the blessed Peter with veneration and wonder. Finally, having been received by King Pepin, he was led by the royal youth to where Charlemagne himself expected him. To do honour to the advent of a guest so venerable, the King had drawn out, and marshalled all his armies, and when the holy pastor came in view, the ranks of armed men fell down upon the earth to pay him homage and implore his blessing. But the King advancing from the centre dismounted from his horse, and having first prostrated himself before Christ's Vicar, and then embraced him with filial affection, they went hand in hand, the Pontiff and King Charles, first to the temple of the Most High to return thanks, and then to the royal palace. There the festivities and

\* Leo III. paid two visits to Charlemagne in Germany (A.D. 796 and 799). In the following account the circumstances of both are, in some instances, combined.

rejoicing were perpetual during many days that the pontiff tarried with the king.

“Meanwhile, the archbishops, bishops, abbots, and clergy of all orders from the surrounding countries, came to pay homage to the apostolic father, and to receive his benediction; and at their entreaties he went about through many provinces consecrating churches and altars. In the royal palace of Aquisgrana\* he consecrated a chapel to Mary ever Virgin. Next, at the humble prayer and solicitation of the venerable father Gerbald, bishop of Leodien, he consecrated churches to the glorious Virgin Mary both in Tungræ and Visete; and, in Colonia Agrippina, he consecrated altars both in St. Martin’s and on the Capitol; and in many other monasteries, altars and chapels he consecrated throughout Gaul and Germany, conferring many indulgences everywhere he went.

“In fine, at the entreaty of the aforesaid glorious king and of the venerable archbishop of Cologne, the same holy pope being surrounded by his cardinals and prelates, and escorted in every respect with regal pomp, set sail along the Rhine towards Werda.† And the holy brotherhood of St. Switbert’s convent, with the inhabitants of the town, came in procession to meet the holy father at the river-side, and from thence conducted him, with the king and his courtiers, amidst devout canticles and great honours, into the church of St. Switbert. And on that day all Werda, as well as the convent, fasted by apostolical authority.

“But on the next day, which was the day before the nones of September, as well the holy Pope Leo as Charles the king and the others assembled in the church of St. Switbert. The divine office being chanted and mass celebrated with all solemnity by the Archbishop Hildebald, the ‘Acts’ of the life of St. Switbert and his many miracles—as narrated by his fellow-countryman and companion, the venerable

\* Aix-la-Chapelle.

† Keisserswerd (?)

priest Marcellus,—the holy Pope Leo, with the assent of his cardinals and of the other prelates there present, solemnly inscribed St. Switbert in the Kalendar of the saints. Upon this, the convent bells rang a joyous peal, making a delightful harmony for many hours in honour of God thus glorified in his servant; and the choirs of holy monks with humble and overflowing hearts poured forth their thanksgiving to heaven, chanting the hymn ‘Te Deum laudamus.’ In the meantime, while these things were proceeding, the aforesaid Archbishop Hildebald, in presence of the most holy apostolic Leo, of Charles the king, and of the rest, devotedly lifted up the relics or bones of the saint from the grave where they had lain buried; and, as he did so, a most delicious odour, as it were of Paradise, diffused itself around—so ravishing the hearts of all, that no one doubted but that the heavenly choirs of angels were present and assisting there.

“These things were done on the day previous to the nones of September, there being present the most victorious Charles king of the Franks, the venerable fathers, Cardinal-archbishops Bernardus of Ostia, Fortunatus of Treveris, Theodorus of Sabina, Nicholas of the title of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, Eustochius of St. Praxede, and Boniface of the title of SS. Marcellinus and Peter, Cardinal-priests Gербald of Leodiensi, Nolquin, bishop of the Normenians; as also many other prelates and dignitaries, but, more especially, Felix Hildebald, archbishop of Cologne, by whose advising and at whose pious instances, the holy Leo had enrolled the blessed Switbert amongst the saints; sailing for that purpose from Cologne to Werda along the Rhine. Moreover, it was decreed by the most holy Pope Leo, that the anniversary day of the canonization should be kept holy, during all time, by the inhabitants of Werda, in honour of St. Switbert. His church was favoured with special indulgences by the same holy pope for the clergy who should celebrate there on the festival



of St. Switbert the holy bishop, and for the faithful who should devoutly assist at the holy mysteries. The same pope also made an offering of a small golden cross, in which was inserted a particle of the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the Emperor Charles offered two golden chalices of pure gold, with two cruets of the same precious ore, besides several other sacred utensils for the altar, with the proviso, that every time the divine mysteries were celebrated in the convent of Werda, with the same, memento should be made of the said emperor. And all the others from the greatest to the least made offerings according to their devotion and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They also contributed in proportion to their means, towards a canopy and shrine, in which might be placed the sacred relics of St. Switbert, to the praise and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost through infinite ages of eternity.

“But when the rumour had spread abroad that holy Leo the pope and Charles the most serene emperor, and the other prelates and princes were coming to Werda to canonize St. Switbert, there assembled from all quarters multitudes of both sexes, with their sons and daughters, to receive the forgiveness of their sins with the apostolical benediction of the holy pope, and to witness so grand a solemnity. Amongst the rest was a certain noble lady, Irringarda, a matron honourable and respected, the sister of honourable father Hildebald the archbishop, and spouse of the valiant Paladin Bertoldus of Grienberg, at that time residing at Troja, otherwise called Xantis. This noble lady having obtained leave from her lord to go and see the festival, embarked at Xantis, in company with many other gentle folk, to sail to Werda, taking with her only two domestics and her first-born, Gocellinus, a little boy of only eight years and six months old. Now as they were drawing near to Werda, the steersman, seeing the immense crowd of boats that were then below him, collected there before

them, put about the helm suddenly, in order to get in to a convenient berth near the shore, and in so doing the boat in which was Iringarda struck another boat, and little Gocellinus, losing his feet as he stood at the prow beside his mother, fell over into the Rhine and sunk. His mother, who had been thrown down by the collision of the two boats, on seeing what had happened and not being able to save her child, tried to cast herself headlong into the Rhine, but being held and prevented by her two attendants and other kind people, she tore away the long veil which fell gracefully from her head over her person, and bathed in floods of tears on account of intense anguish, the disconsolate Iringarda filled the shores of the Rhine with her cries and lamentations. This happened about the time of vespers, or the fifth hour of the evening. But when the archbishop her brother heard it, he vented his affliction in heavy sighs, being exceedingly grieved; and sent a messenger in all haste to Bertoldus with the sad tidings that his son was drowned. But the lady Iringarda clapping her hands like a woman out of her mind, entered into St. Switbert's church with groans and piteous cries imploring God to take pity on her, and to vouchsafe, through the merits of St. Switbert, to give her back her child. In the long run, being somewhat soothed, by many most noble and compassionate matrons who gathered round her, and above all by the archbishop her brother, she suffered herself to be conducted by him into the hospice, where they endeavoured to refocilate and console her broken heart.

"But she, utterly unable to rest, passed the entire night without sleep, assiduously prayed to St. Switbert with a devout and anguished heart, imploring him not to forsake in her distress her whom he had befriended in so many tribulations, and vowing, that if, through his intercession, her Gocellinus was again restored to her bosom, she would devote him perpetually to serve him in God's sanctuary.

"Next day, when morning beamed forth with res-

plendent brightness, certain good men, through the love of God, and at the entreaty of the archbishop, having put out their boats began to search for the body of master Gocellinus that had sunk in the Rhine. This they did with drawnets, and iron hooks, and other suitable instruments. At last, about the eighth hour, just before the solemn mass, one called Lambert Dohet de Rubrica, feeling his hook to have fastened in something which he imagined to be a child's clothes, having called his companions to his assistance, they with great skill drew up the dead body, and lifting it from the water gave it to the heart-broken mother. She, on beholding the dead body of her darling child, swooned away overpowered by the sight; and on coming to herself again, she took the body in her arms, and being followed by many illustrious and kind-hearted persons of both sexes, weeping and condoling with her, she laid it down before the shrine of St. Switbert; and all having devoutly joined together in prayer, life returned to the boy. He opened his eyes and was alive again, and getting on his feet, he began to wonder at the multitudes and throngs of people who were all gazing at him with astonishment, [*'et loquebatur matri suæ dulciter;'*] and immediately taking off his dripping garments, on account of the rush and pressure of the crowds, at the suggestion of some person, they placed the boy standing on a high place, where he could be seen by all. At the sight whereof, there burst forth a shout like thunder, from the multitude, praising God in St. Switbert, on account of the great and manifest mercy which he had there effected before all, through the merits of his holy servant.

"In the same hour, Bertoldus came riding at full speed, with a retinue of only ten horsemen, although he was lieutenant of the king in those parts, such was his distraction and disconsolate sorrow for the loss of his beloved son; but when entering into the church he beheld him restored from death to life, he glorified God in his servant Switbert. Therefore, the most



holy apostolic Leo, and Charles the king, apprized of these things by the Archbishop of Cologne, uncle of Gocellinus, who had been raised from the dead, commanded the said child to be brought and placed before them, whom, when they beheld now living, who for near fifteen hours had been under the waters in the bottom of the Rhine, they praised the benignity of God, who ever, by various wonderful interpositions, magnifies and honours his saints. But the archbishop, with the consent of his parents, took off the gold bracelet from the neck of the little boy, and ordained him a cleric, (clipping his hair,) and changing his name, called him Switbert, and entering the monastery of his gracious patron, the boy (like Samuel in the temple) served him always there in great humility; and Count Bertoldus, through love of St. Switbert and his son, assigned to the aforesaid monastery certain lands to be holden by it in perpetuity.

“At length, after having tarried many days with the king, visited and honoured by the prelates of all those parts, and by the laity of all ranks, assembled in immense numbers from all the surrounding countries, the apostolic Leo resolved to take leave of Charlemagne and his court, by whom he was loaded with the most sumptuous presents, and return to Rome.

“The Archbishop of Cologne, and Aaron, archbishop of Salisburg, with four bishops, that is to say, Bernard of Worms, Atzone of Frisinga, Jesse of Amiens, and Cunibert of—I forget what city—as also the Counts Retigarius, Germanus, and Elenget, were sent by the king to accompany the holy pontiff, who was received as an apostle in all the cities through which he passed. And having arrived at last at Rome, on the vigil of St. Andrew, all the clergy, the senate, and the Roman people, the troops drawn up in grand array, the members of the monastic orders, the deaconesses, the noble matrons, and all the foreign colleges, videlicet, the Franks, the Frisians, the Saxons, and the Lombards, came out as far as the Milvian bridge to meet the holy father, and with gonfalons and ban-

ners conducted him to the Vatican Basilica along the Tiber bank, which, with the overhanging mountain on the right of the way, reverberated with the canticles of triumph and jubilee which they chanted as they moved along. There the pontiff celebrated the solemn mass, at which all the congregation devoutly received the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ: and, next day, when the festival of the blessed apostle Peter had been solemnized—according to ancient custom—crossing the Tiber, the holy pope entered the city of Rome, and was conducted with great pomp and rejoicing to the patriarchal palace of the Lateran.”\*

Here the correspondent of Alcuin took occasion to enter upon a most minute description of the papal city, of which the substance and most interesting particulars may be stated in a few words.

Pope Sisinnius taking up the determination, in the year 708, of restoring the walls, had prepared materials for the purpose, when he died rather unexpectedly; however, the work was commenced in 715, by Pope Gregory II., near San Lorenzo's gate. This noble undertaking had been nearly completed, when the violent commotions arising out of the insane attempts of Leo the Iconoclast caused it to be suspended. Again, when the city was threatened with an attack by Desiderius, the king of Lombardy, the various townships of Tuscany and Campania, with those of the Roman duchy, were all invited by Pope Adrian I. to join in completing what his predecessors had not been able to finish. To the men of each province and town, he allotted a separate portion of the entire circuit commensurate with their numbers, and paid them liberally for their work. The letter of Eginard describes the walls thus completed, as coinciding with those of Aurelian. They were defended by 387 towers, and 7,079 merlins, had 1,593 larger, and 1,576 smaller port-holes for the discharge of various missiles, and were entered by 14 gates and 5 posterns. The city itself he describes as presenting a very grand and imposing

\* Murat. ann. 799, p. 254. Baron. 799, and 804, tom. vii.

aspect, not only by reason of the majestic remains of antiquity still scattered in every direction, but also of the number of lofty towers and castles, erected by the chief nobles, upon every vantage ground, upon the hills, among the ruins, and along the Tiber. The characteristic charm, however, of the city of the popes, he said, consisted in the religious buildings, such as monasteries, hospitals, and colleges, but above all, in the immense number of churches, basilicas, and oratories, that met the pilgrim's admiration and reverence to whatever side he turned. To give a more familiar insight to his friend of their numbers, and magnificence, and of the riches they contained, he detailed what had been done by only one, the then reigning pontiff, for the preservation and beautifying of the churches. In this account, we read of his making offerings to the altar of St. Peter, (*nutritori suo*) a golden thurible, weighing 17lbs. other sacred utensils of purest gold, and divers gems, in weight 49 lbs., three great crowns of silver, 307 lbs., besides richly embroidered curtains, with massive embellishments. He restored the roof of St. Peter's, and adorned the great arch with beautiful paintings. In like manner he adorned the basilica Salvatoris and St. Paul's with images, restored the roof of St. Anastasia's church, fallen into decay from age; renovated the parochial church of St. Sabina, presenting it with ornaments and sacred vessels to the weight of 34 lbs. of silver. Likewise to the basilica of the blessed mother of God, called *ad Præsepe*, he gave a ciborium of purest silver, 71 lbs., besides other rich donations in ornaments, curtains, and vestments. To the basilica of the blessed Laurence, martyr, without the walls, three statues, Our Lord, St. Peter, and St. Laurence, weighing  $54\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. of silver, with an antependium for the altar, of the richest materials, having the history of our Lord's passion and resurrection. He restored the roof of St. Felix and Adauctus, martyrs, near St. Paul's; likewise those of St. Mennas, of St. Vitalis, martyr of Christ, as also the cemetery church of St.



Sixtus, and that also of St. Cornelius on the Via Appia, also the church of our Lady in Fonticana. He adorned the basilica of St. Andrew near St. Peter's, to which latter he presented most costly vestments, sparkling with gems, and having the history, as well of our Lord's giving to Peter the power of binding and loosing, as of the martyrdom of the princes of the apostles, SS. Peter and Paul. He made gifts, likewise, to the title of Eudoxia, of great price; to the altar of St. Petronilla, and to the basilica of St. Clement. The title of St. Susanna he rebuilt from the foundations on an enlarged scale, because he had been ordained priest in that church. The absis he adorned with very wonderful mosaics; had a presbytery constructed with marble pavement, and restored the side porticos with marble columns, as also a baptistery, which he ornamented, and presented with very rich gifts and vessels. In the patriarchal palace of the Lateran, he built a triclinium greater than all other tricliniums, and embellished it, in proportion to its magnitude, with divers columns, as well of porphyry as of statuary marble, with sculptured roses and lilies, on the architraves and panels; the absis (still existing) was decorated with mosaics. There were likewise two other absides, and the entire hall was incrustated with marble. The basilica of St. Prisca, he also had adorned and enriched with gifts, vestments, chalices, and other sacred vessels of various kinds. He also constructed a triclinium in the Vatican, near St. Peter's, very splendid and spacious.

All this was previous to his second visit to Charlemagne.\* After his return, the number, variety, and opulence of his gifts and offerings increased. Besides the churches already noticed, there are mentioned those of St. Callistus, of St. Pancratius, of St. Maria ad Martyres (the Pantheon), the titles or parish churches of St. Salvius, of St. Boniface, of St. Mary in Cosmodin, of St. Cosmas and Damian, of St. Valentine, of SS. Nereus and Achilleius, of St. Mary in

\* A. D. 801.

Dominica. Next the monastery churches: those of the monasteries of St. Saba, of St. Erasmus, of the monastery Clivi Scauri (either St. Gregory's or St. John and Paul's). He also enriched the title of Pammachius, renewed the basilica of St. Andrew in Silice, at the third milestone on the Appian Way, with its baptistery and portico, and made it rich presents in vestments, sacred vessels, and books.

"But the day previous to the Kalends of May, in the ninth indiction, there suddenly occurred," says the biographer, "a dreadful earthquake in punishment for our sins, and being shaken by its concussions, the entire roof of St. Paul's basilica fell in; which, when that great and illustrious pontiff beheld, he began to lament over the great destruction of so many precious and exquisite ornaments that was made. But the Lord inspiring, and under the protection of the blessed prince of the apostles, straining all his energies, like a hero entering on a mighty exploit, he ceased not till it was restored in greater splendour than ever, decorating it with more beautiful marbles, and not only the basilica itself, but the adjacent presbytery and portico. In the absis, he placed three images of gold, of our Saviour and of the princes of the apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, and another over the great portal, an image of our Lord in gold. The windows of the church, of wondrous beauty, he also adorned (*metallo cypsino*). He made offerings to the altar of St. Gregory, confessor pontiff; to the titles of St. Cæcilia, of St. Eusebius, of St. Vitalis, also of St. Pudentiana, of St. Anastasia, of St. Praxede, of St. Laurence in Formoso; to the monasteries of St. Anastasius, of St. Sylvester, of St. Lucia in Renatis, to St. Angelo in Fabiano; to the deaconries of St. Lucia in the Seven Ways, of St. Sergius and Bacchus, of St. Lucia in Orphea, of St. Eustachius, to the church of St. Sabina. The church of St. Paul the apostle—called *Conventus*, in the Orbetan territory—had become so dilapidated that the relics had been removed from it, and sheep and cattle used to

take shelter within its walls : he had it rebuilt, reconsecrated, and sent for it relics and rich gifts. In like manner, the basilica of St. Peter the apostle, situate in Albano, the church of St. Hippolytus, in the city of Portuense, of the mother of God in Fermo, of St. Agapitus in Præneste, of St. Clementus in Velitri, of St. Laurence in Damaso, in the city of Rome, were all restored or ornamented, or enriched with costly and sacred gifts ; also the churches of St. Martin, of St. Mary, in Via Lata, of St. Agatha, of the blessed Archangel in Septimo, of St. Apollinaris, of St. Vitus, of St. Stephen in Monte Cœlio, of the martyrs Primus and Felicianus, of the blessed Archangel in the street of Patricians, of St. Sebastian on the Via Appia, of the holy cross in Jerusalem, of St. Lawrence in Tibur. St. Marcellus in quartodecimo (*i. e.* in the fourteenth region) he restored when consumed by fire. To St. Peter, his great patron, he presented a book of the gospels in gold, studded with emeralds and pearls of admirable size and beauty, weighing 7lbs. 4ozs. These are but a few of his gifts, and of the churches that were indebted to his admirable munificence and brilliant zeal for the glory of God's house and the majesty of divine worship.\* But munificent as he was to the church, he was still more open handed to the poor of Christ : in sooth, it was on account of this virtue, which, from his tenderest age, he had been assiduous in practising, according to the dictate of our Lord to conceal from the left what the right hand doth, and in impressing upon all within his sphere, that he had been elected to the apostolic throne with wonderful concord and unanimity. Withal, he had been ever a great admirer of learning, as he was now a great encourager of it, and a patron of learned men.†

\* The forty-one folio pages in Anastatius given to the life of St. Leo III. are almost entirely taken up with the enumeration of gifts and undertakings for the churches, of which the foregoing are but very scanty extracts.

† "Leo tertius natione Romanus ex patre Azuppio sedit annos viginti, menses quinque, dies decem et septem. Qui a parva ætate



“Meantime, the invincible King Charles having assembled a diet at Magonza, in the autumn of the year following, where he made known the object of his passing into Italy—the entire French monarchy being at that time reduced to perfect subordination—set out at the head of a powerful army, and after halting seven days at Ravenna, moved on by Ancona, from whence he dismissed King Pepin with his forces to Beneventum; and so crossing the Apennine he came to Rome. Full of joy at the arrival of such a guest, the pontiff sent the magnates and the senate a distance of thirty miles to meet him. He was met at the first milestone from the city by the Roman troops, and by the clergy in procession, preceded by the children of the various schools with palm branches and boughs of olive in their hands, and chanting canticles and hymns of joy as they advanced. At the sight of the cross, the king dismounted from his horse, and, surrounded by his paladins and royal court, proceeded on foot to the Vatican Basilica. There the pontiff, surrounded by his cardinals and the prelacy, with a vast multitude of the Roman people, awaited his approach. The monarch ascended the steps leading to the vestibule of St. Peter’s upon his knees, devoutly kissing each step in succession until he came to the platform of the porch, where having been embraced and precognised by the apostolic Leo, they both advanced to the confession of St. Peter, to return thanks

in vestiario Patriarchii enutritus, et educatus, omnemque ecclesiasticam disciplinam spiritualiter eruditus, tam in psalterio, quamque in sacris divinis scripturis pollens, subdiaconus factus in presbyterii honorem proventus est. Erat enim vir castus, loquela facundus, et animo constans. Ubi vero inveniebat aliquem præcipuum monachum, vel servum Dei in colloquiis divinis, et oratione, cum eo penitus vacare non cessabat. Et valde, nimisque hilaris in eleemosynis existerat, verum etiam et infirmorum prorsus maximus visitator, prædicans illis scripturaliter, ut eorum animas in eleemosynis redimerent. Qui plures ejus prædicationibus annuentes, quicquid ille pro Christo commendabat occulte die noctuque pauperibus erogabant: fructum animarum crebro offerens salubriter Deo,” &c.—*Anast. in vit. Leo. III.*

to the Most High, amid joyful canticles and acclamations from all sides.

"But the greatest day of all was, the festival of the nativity in the year of our Lord 800, a day which beheld the successor of the 'fisherman' bestowing the diadem of the Cæsars upon a barbarian king: that king binding himself by vows and promises in the name of Christ, to devote himself with all the vast resources at his command to defend and protect the empire of Peter.\* During the celebration of the divine mysteries, the venerable pontiff took from the altar an imperial diadem, and with his sacred hands placed it on the brow of Charlemagne. Then it was that the faithful Romans, remembering the devotedness of this hero in the defence of the church of Christ and of his vicar, burst forth, as if by divine inspiration, into this acclamation—'Long life and victory to Charles, the most pious Augustus, crowned of God the great and pacific emperor of the Romans!' Thrice was this acclamation taken up by the people, the princes, and the hierarchy; and all with joyful voices united in the litanies of the saints that were chanted before the shrine of St. Peter, while Charlemagne was anointed emperor with holy chrism by the blessed pope on the natal day of our Lord Jesus Christ.† Then it was that Charles the emperor made solemn oath in the name of Christ, before God and his blessed apostle St. Peter, to be, to the utmost of his knowledge, power, and ability, the defender and champion of the Roman church.‡ He likewise made offerings to the apostle's shrine—most costly offerings in massive plate, with vases and ornaments, such as lamps,

\* Vid. Baron. an. 800, p. 598, § vi. and vii.

† See Baron. an. 800, p. 598, § vi. with the notes of Pagi; Gibbon, ch. xlix. p. 221 of vol. vi.; Muratori, an. 800, tom. iv. par. 2, p. 260.

‡ "In nomine Christi spondeo atque polliceor ego Carolus Imperator coram Deo et beato Petro Apostolo, me protectorem et defensorem fore hujus S. Romanæ ecclesiæ in omnibus utilitatibus, quatenus divino fultus fuero adjutorio prout sciero, poteroque."—*Apud Baron. ad an. 800, No. 7.*

and chalices, and crowns, all of barbaric gold, and sparkling with diamonds and jewels beyond all price—no small portion of the Gothic plunder, which had been won by Clovis, from the successors of Astolphus. Thus were the treasures and embellishments that had been rudely torn from the queen of pagan empire, brought back by the hands of the barbarians to deck the virgin spouse of Christ. In fine, the donation of King Pepin, his royal sire, to St. Peter, as augmented by the estates and provinces which he himself had already added to it, was solemnly ratified and renewed by Charlemagne as emperor of the Romans.”

On hearing these tidings, the pilgrims could not restrain themselves for joy, but broke, as if with one voice, into the hymn—“*Te Deum laudamus!*” But one austere man—a monk of Iona—joined not in the hymn, but kept pondering, darkly, within himself, saying:—“How hath it come to pass, that, together with the ‘keys of the kingdom of heaven,’ the sceptre of the church, the sceptre of temporal sway also, over Rome, and over the famous realms that did send forth the conquerors of the nations, hath come into the hands of the fisherman; of him who entered the imperial city without scrip or staff? How have his successors come to be seized, and possessed, of those dominions; and is it meet, or for the good of the church, that they should sway them?”



### CHAPTER III.

“ While the patriarch of Constantinople was a domestic slave under the eye of his master, a distant and dangerous station, amidst the barbarians of the West, excited the spirit and freedom of the popes. Their popular election endeared them to the Romans ; the public and private indigence was relieved by their ample revenue ; and the weakness or neglect of the Greek emperors compelled them to consult, both in peace and war, the temporal safety of the city. The same character was adopted by the Italian, the Greek, or the Syrian, who ascended the chair of St. Peter, and after the loss of her legions and provinces, the genius and fortune of the popes again restored the supremacy of Rome.”  
— *Gibbon, Decl. and Fall, &c.* ch. xlix.

It was not on a sudden, or by means of violence, that the successors of a Jewish fisherman attained to kingly power over the city of the Cæsars, and to that paramount influence in the political affairs of Europe, which they exercised during the middle ages. The germ of a dominion, which ultimately embraced so many vast and warlike monarchies in its shade, and reared its head for centuries above those of kings and emperors, would seem to have been planted as early as the “mustard seed” itself. Hildebrand, or Boniface VIII., or John XXII., never claimed a jurisdiction in temporals more absolute or universal than was exercised *de facto* by the first pope ; for “as many as were possessed of lands or of houses sold them, and brought the prices of them, and laid them at the apostles’ feet.” The infant church had “all things in common,” and thus did it happen that the supreme control of the secular as well as of the ecclesiastical interests of the Christian commonwealth, at least while in its germ, came to be vested in St. Peter.

Far from being weakened by time, this tendency of the primitive Christians became confirmed from day

to day, mainly on account of the persecutions. Every thing conspired, during those seasons of tribulation, to detach them from earthly projects and enjoyments, and to prompt them to such investment of their treasures as is so emphatically and frequently recommended in the gospel. These influences acted with greater force and uniformity in Rome, than in any other quarter of the church. It is evident from the "Acts of the Martyrs" that the wealth of the Roman Christians during the first three centuries was in a great measure, if not altogether, at the disposal of the popes; so that before ever they emerged from the catacombs they had the control of immense temporal resources. Their property was vastly augmented by the munificence of the Christian emperors, and by the princely converts who emulated their example. From the reign of Constantine, the estates of St. Peter are to be met with in the most fertile provinces, not only of Europe, but of Africa and Asia; besides those of Egypt and the East, some of which have been already specified, there were in Italy alone the patrimonies of the Cottian Alps, of Tuscany, Sabinia, Bruttium, Calabria, Lucania, and Sicily.

History bears testimony to the spirit in which these possessions were administered. As long as the persecutions lasted, they were expended in the maintenance of the poor, in the solemn interment of the martyrs, in the erection and embellishment of oratories in the crypts and catacombs, in sending out missionaries, in procuring consolation or liberty for the captive confessors, and in sending aid to the most distant provinces of Christ's kingdom in their distress. "Moreover, there is extant," says Eusebius, "an epistle of Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, to the Romans, *super-scribed to Soter, that time the bishop there*: out of which it is not amiss here to insert some words, wherein he much commends the usage and custom of the Romans, observed by them even until the times of the persecution (of Diocletian) raised in our own age. He writes thus: 'For this hath been your

custom even from the beginning (of your conversion to Christianity) to be divers ways beneficial *to all the brethren, and to send relief to most churches throughout every city*: sometimes supplying the wants of such as are in necessity, at others supplying the wants of those brethren that are condemned to work in the mines. By such charitable munificence, which from the beginning you have been accustomed to transmit to others, being Romans, you retain the custom received from your Roman forefathers. *Which usage your blessed Bishop Soter has not only diligently observed, but greatly improved; being both instrumental, and ready in the conveyance of your bounty designed for the saints: and also comforting with blessed words, (as a tender and affectionate father does his children,) those brethren who come as strangers to you.'"*\*

During the terrible series of disasters which humbled the empress city to the dust, the popes became the forlorn hope of the senate and the Roman people. It was customary with them to store up the produce of their immense estates, and, during the seasons of famine which frequently recurred, on account of the imbecility or negligence of government, to dole it out gratuitously to the starving multitude.† They attended to the repair of the public edifices, the endowment of institutions, to the maintenance of the churches, of the colleges for missionaries, of the monasteries, and of the hospitals for strangers and the sick. At a time, too, when hospitality was an apostolic virtue, the hospitalities of the popes were renowned over the whole world. No matter how lowly the pilgrim, or from what country he came, whoever visited the "threshold of the apostles" was allowed to want for nothing. The needy palmer was as welcome as the prelate or the crowned head, while the precedence and more sumptuous treatment, due to

\* Eccl. Hist. book iv. ch. 23. See also, a similar testimony from S. Dionysius of Alexandria relative to the churches of Syria and Arabia, ap. Euseb. l. vii. c. 5,<sup>1</sup> with the note of Valesius.

† Sigonius, l. i.



rank, were religiously conceded to the latter; nor was any one permitted to depart without bringing back with him some token of St. Peter's bounty to his native land.\* From the same funds were equipped those expeditions which constantly went from Rome to convert and humanize the barbarians; and the residue, after these demands had been satisfied, were never spared when they could purchase the public safety.

By arts such as these, the rudiments of papal dominion were first established; they were still further consolidated by the sacrifices and patriotic services of the pontiffs, especially during the downfall of the imperial city.

As if the power founded by Romulus and the Cæsars had been designed by Providence to serve as a chrysalis, or husk, to the papacy, the latter begins to appear and advance in development, in proportion as the former crumbles away, or is shattered to pieces by the invaders. "The public and private indigence," says Gibbon, "was relieved by the ample revenue of the popes, and the weakness or neglect of the emperors compelled them to consult, both in peace and war, for the temporal safety of the city." It was behind the chair of Peter that the remnant of the senate and the people sought protection in the last extremities of their distress.† When the legions were annihilated, and their proud walls could no longer serve them, the venerable priest went forth and turned back the furious Hun; he moved the ruthless Vandal to compassion, and interposed the apostolic ægis between the sword of Alaric and the vanquished. The great St. Leo was more than the sovereign of his country, which he *saved* from destruction more than once. However, it is not until the pontificate of St.

\* Anastasius Bibliothec. in vit. S. Martin.

† See the embassies of St. Leo the Great to Attila and Genseric, of Popes John and Agapitus to Constantinople, of the pope's vicar Pelagius to Totila—all mentioned in the preceding pages of this work.

Gregory the Great that the pontiff and the prince begin to appear conspicuously identified : for it was at that period precisely that Rome, and Italy in general, had reached the crisis of utter abandonment and misery.\*

“ Between the years 566 and 569, the whole of Italy,” says Muratori, “ was afflicted by a pestilence, which almost reduced the country to a desert. Such was the mortality, that in many districts nearly all the inhabitants were swept away ; nor was there any one left to reap the harvests or gather in the vintage—‘ *nè v’era chi miétesse, nè chi recogliesse l’uve.*’ With the approach of winter,” pursues the annalist, “ the sound of martial instruments was audible, day and night ; and it was the impression of many that they could discern the murmur of a distant host. These were but preludes of the woes which impended over Italy ; for Alboin, or Albion, king of the Lombards, burst through the passes of the Julian Alps in the following year ; and, at the head of a countless army of rapacious and sanguinary barbarians, swept, with irresistible fury, over the hapless land, to devastate by fire and sword whatever the plague had spared. These ruthless bands, composed of the most fierce and warlike adventurers from a variety of barbarous nations, either Arians in religion, or still addicted to the most savage practices of heathenism, overran the country with such rapidity, that in less than seven years we find them permanently established not only in the rich provinces on which they have impressed their name, but also in Tuscany, Spoleto, and Beneventum ; while the garrisons of the Greek emperors, formidable only to the exhausted and heart-broken Italians, beheld from the walls of Ravenna, and a few other fortified places, the dwellings of their subjects in flames, and themselves coupled together like dogs, and dragged away into slavery beyond the sea and the mountains.

“ The invaders, who spread themselves in every

\* A.D. 590 to A.D. 604.

direction without resistance, were to be tracked by the horrors and dreary solitude they left behind." "Behold," says St. Gregory, writing to the Emperor Maurice, "every thing in these parts is given up to the mercy of the barbarians; the cities are destroyed, the fortresses dismantled, the open country, stripped of its inhabitants, is become a wilderness for want of cultivation; and the servants of Christ are the daily victims immolated by the sanguinary superstition of these idolaters." Their fanaticism, specially directed against the sanctuaries, the clergy, and whatever else was consecrated to Catholic worship, left St. Gregory to mourn over many a ruined church, and to complain that, in several districts, there was not left a single priest even to baptize the newly-born, or absolve the dying from their sins; but that, perhaps, which gives us the most lively idea of the horrors of this bitter epoch is the impression, universally prevalent at the time, that fiery corruscations in the heavens, and signs similar to those that ushered in the destruction of Jerusalem, had been beheld by the terrified population, especially in the northern regions of the sky, for some time previous to the invasion of the Lombards.

It was the destiny of Rome to be as pre-eminent in the disasters of Italy, as she had been in its triumphs. To beleaguer, plunder, and make desolate the queen of empire, had been the grand object of ambition, a kind of inspired mania, which every invader, from Alaric, who found it a boundless aggregation of palaces, baths, theatres, and temples, peopled by the aristocracy of the earth, down to Totila, who left it "a marble wilderness."

The elements themselves conspired to put the last hand to the work of desolation. There is a prophecy attributed to St. Benedict, in the 2nd book of St. Gregory's Dialogues, which said, that "Rome was not to be *exterminated* by the hands of barbarians; but that, exhausted by tempests, whirlwinds of fire, and earthquakes, it should of itself collapse into a heap



of ruins ;” and the holy pontiff in one of his discourses to the people, appeals to the scenes by which they were actually surrounded to prove the truth of this prediction. “The lofty tree,” says Gibbon, “was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on the ground. The ministers of command, and the messengers of victory, no longer met on the Appian or Flaminian way ; and the hostile approach of the Lombards was often felt and continually feared. The Campagna was reduced to the state of a dreary wilderness ; in which the land was barren, the water impure, and the air infectious. Curiosity and ambition no longer attracted the nations to the capital of the world ; but if chance or necessity directed the steps of a wandering stranger, he contemplated with horror the vacancy and solitude of the city, and might be tempted to ask, ‘Where is the senate, and where are the people?’”

Such was the condition of the eternal city when the successors of the fishermen were induced, not by ambition, but through mercy, to take it under their protection ; and if those regions along the Tiber which had been the theatre, for so many centuries, of all that was most illustrious and important in human affairs, have not reverted to a state of aboriginal wildness and solitude, similar to that in which they were when first explored by the shepherd king, Evander, it is to the popes, as successors of the fisherman, the credit must be given. “Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage,” says Gibbon, “the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been animated by a vital principle which again restored her to honour and dominion.”

It would not be possible to imagine anything more wretched and utterly hopeless than the condition of Rome at the juncture when St. Gregory was compelled by the voice of God, expressed through the united and passionate entreaties both of the clergy and the people, to abandon the cell where he had consecrated his life to study, austerity, and prayer, in order to

undertake the labours and solitudes of the pontificate, and, with them, the still more intolerable burthen of watching over the temporal affairs, not only of Rome, but of all Italy. A pestilence, brought on by the stagnant waters which a dreadful inundation of the Tiber had left behind it, was raging at the time of his accession, and such was the mortality, that, according to the testimony of an eye-witness, no less than eighty persons fell dead during the procession of the Litanies. "The sword has reached the very soul!" exclaims the afflicted pastor, addressing himself to the miserable remnant of the once lordly and innumerable people, during this visitation; "behold the falchion of Divine chastisement is unsheathed against us, and wide wasting, and so terribly sudden are its strokes, that death, as if impatient of delay, no longer waits till languor and the ravages of disease have prepared the way for him; but, as your eyes, alas! bear witness, springs, as if with a bound, upon his victims. Parents behold their offspring hurried before them to the tomb. The moribund and the decrepid survive the blooming and the ambitious; nor is it merely here and there the people fall: they are struck down in multitudes, and whole houses are made desolate on a sudden."\*

Shortly after, in a homily to the people on the woes announced in the first chapter of the prophet Joel, beginning, "What the palmer-worm hath left, the locust hath eaten," he says, "Behold, my brethren, in the new disasters which come thickening upon us every day, we are made eye-witnesses of the woes which our ears have heard denounced in the words of prophecy,—'Ecce, fratres mei, jam cernimus quod audiebamus.' Of a population once innumerable, you see what is left, and even of this wretched handful, numbers are continually swept away by the sudden casualties which fall upon us in quick succes-

\* See another Homily on the gospel. 1 Dom. advent. in Brev. Rom. 3rd noct.

sion, and by the strange and diversified calamities which each new day brings with it. How many, for instance, retired to repose the other night, full of projects for the morrow, who were buried under the ruins of their own dwellings, ere the dawn revealed to the survivors the extent of devastation caused by that sudden whirlwind, which not only tore up the sturdiest trees by the roots, and blew down houses, but levelled the most massive of our sacred edifices to their foundations?"

But, as if the catalogue of miseries still wanted something to complete it, the seditious violence of foreign mercenaries within the walls is added to the ruthless hostilities with which the Lombards lay waste the environs of the city. "*Hostiûm gladiis foris sine cessatione confodimur, sed seditione militûm interno periculo gravius urgemur*" are the words of one of the pontiff's letters written to the Greek exarch about this period.

Time brought no alleviation to this distress of St. Gregory and his people. Five years later, we find him breaking off from his series of expositions of Ezekiel, on account of the public dangers and distress which called him to far different occupations. "Let me not be blamed," he says, "if, after this lecture, I cease from these expositions, for the public tribulations are increasing, as, alas! you are too well aware. The ravages of the sword hem us in on every side, and momentarily threaten us with destruction. Some of our wretched people return, with their hands chopped off, to tell us of others who are groaning in captivity, or who have already suffered some cruel death. Oh! wonder not if my tongue falter and refuse to proceed further with these sacred expositions, for my very soul is weary of existence." And in the following year, writing to the patriarch of Alexandria, the afflicted pontiff says,—"I am unwilling to enter into any description of all we suffer from the swords of the Lombards, who sack and



slaughter all before them, lest, in seeking for commiseration, we add to the sorrows of a heart already too much afflicted.”\* Again, in 603, he writes to Phocas,—“It is not possible for human language to suggest any adequate idea of what we have had to suffer daily, and without intermission, from the Lombard incursions during the last five and thirty years;” and in the year 604, immediately previous to his death, the following is the picture of Rome and Italy given by the venerable pontiff, in one of his expositions of Ezekiel, which he had again resumed :—“Scenes of misery meet our eyes, and our ears are assailed with the cries of lamentation and suffering, no matter to what side we turn. The country is reduced to a wilderness, strewn with the ruins of towns and cities :— ‘Nullus in agris agricola, pene nullus in urbibus habitator remansit;’ and it is our doom to see the trifling residue of the population that is still left incessantly subjected to the horrors of mutilation, or slaughtered or dragged into captivity. As for this city, once the queen of the world, judge ye who are spectators of the immensity and variety of her disasters, how she is crushed and humbled to the earth by incessant shocks of invasion, by the carnage of her citizens, and the dread of dangers incessantly impending over her. All her mighty ones are taken away. What has become of the senate and the Roman people? Of the majestic order of the past not one trace is left; and after her people

\* Again, in preaching on the festival of SS. Nereus and Achilleus, he says :—“Ecce mundus qui diligitur, fugit. Sancti isti, ad quorum tumbam consistimus, florentem mundum mentis despectu calcaverunt. Erat tunc, vita longa, salus continua, opulentia in rebus, fecunditas in propagine, tranquillitas in diuturna pace; et tamen cum in seipso floreret, jam in eorum cordibus mundus arruerat. Ecce jam mundus in seipso aruit, et adhuc in cordibus nostris floret. Ubique mors, ubique luctus, ubique desolatio, undique percutimur, undique amaritudinibus replemur; et tamen, cœca mente carnalis concupiscentiæ ipsas ejus amaritudines amamus, fugientem sequimur, labenti inhæremus.”—*Homil.* xxviii.

have perished, her walls and trophies fall of their own accord, and crumble into dust." \*

To imagine, however, that St. Gregory's patriotism was confined to the outpouring of lamentations over the public calamities, would be to misconceive his history. Notwithstanding the bodily infirmities of the most tormenting description, which made his life a protracted martyrdom, and the cares and duties of his apostolic office, every day of his fourteen years' pontificate was signalized by exertions the most devoted and effective for his country. During that entire period, the administration and defence, not only of Rome, but of Italy, were thrown upon his shoulders by the neglect and embarrassments of the Greek emperors; so absorbed in troubles at home, and in struggles against the Avars and Persians, as to be utterly incapable of affording any protection or assistance to their Italian subjects. It is to no purpose that the pontiff prays for succour against the public enemy. His remonstrances, both by letter, and through his nuncios at Constantinople, are equally ineffectual. Mauritius never interferes unless to requite the sacrifices of the pontiff with reproach and invective, or to frustrate his plans for the public safety.

The misfortunes of Rome, says Gibbon, involved the apostolic pastor in the business of peace and war; he sends governors to the towns and cities; issues orders to the generals; relieves the public distress; treats of peace and of the ransom of captives with the enemy. What wonder if, in discharging these offices, in conjunction with those of his supreme vicariate over the church, the dignities

\* "Ipsam autem, quæ aliquando mundi domina videbatur, qualis remanserit, Roma, conspicimus; immensis doloribus multipliciter attrita, desolatione civitum, impressione hostium, frequentia minarum, jam de illâ omnes potentes ablati sunt. Ubi enim senatus, ubi jam populus? Omnis in ea dignitatum ordo extinctus, et tamen nos ipsos paucos qui remanisimus, adhuc quotidie gladii, adhuc quotidie innumeræ tribulationes premunt, et postquam defecerunt homines, etiam parietes cadunt."

of prince and pontiff should seem to be united in his person?\*

"To superintend the hierarchy of the church, and the various orders of the clergy; to provide for the temporal and spiritual necessities of the monasteries and of the poor; and, at the same time, to be ever on the alert against the stratagems of the Lombard foe, and, what is still more harassing and difficult, to frustrate the treachery and plots of the military; the torment and toil of all this will be estimated by you," writes the pontiff to a holy bishop, "to be great, even as that brotherly affection with which we are confident your fraternity regards us."

But while he was thus active in warding off invasion, and providing against external danger, he never ceased to minister to every want, and mitigate the sorrows of his people with the wisdom and affection of a parent.

"The church of Rome," says Gibbon, "as has been formerly observed, was endowed with ample possessions in Italy, Sicily, and the most distant provinces; and her agents who were frequently sub-deacons, had acquired a civil and even criminal jurisdiction over their tenants and husbandmen. The successor of St. Peter administered his patrimony with the temper of a vigilant and moderate landlord; and the epistles of Gregory are filled with salutary instructions to abstain from doubtful and vexatious law suits; to preserve the integrity of weights and measures; to grant every reasonable delay, and to reduce the capi-

\* Mr. Gibbon, with his wonted ingenuity and bad faith, makes St. Gregory doubt "whether power or ambition prompted him to supply the place of his absent sovereign;" whereas no such uncertainty, as to his motives, can be collected from the words which the pontiff uses:—"Ita ut sæpe incertum fiat, utrum pastoris officium an terreni proceris agat;" (lib. i. ep. xxv. ad Johan. Epist. Const.) but, on the contrary, it is evident, not only from his express declarations, but from the uniform tenor of his life, that he deplored as the heaviest of his many afflictions, the dire necessity which forced him to take the lead in secular transactions, rather than see his people utterly destroyed.



tation of the slaves and the glebe. The rent on the produce of these estates was transported to the mouth of the Tiber, at the risk and expense of the pope ; in the use of wealth he acted like a faithful steward of the church and the poor, and liberally applied to their wants the inexhaustible resources of abstinence and order. The voluminous accounts of his receipts and disbursements were kept above three hundred years in the Lateran as a model of Christian economy.

“ On the four great festivals, he divided their quarterly allowance to the clergy, to his domestics, to the monasteries, the churches, the places of burial, the almshouses, and the hospitals of Rome, and the rest of the diocese.\* On the first day of every month he distributed to the poor, according to the season, their stated portion of corn, wine, cheese, vegetables, oil, fish, fresh provisions, clothes, and money ; and his treasures were continually summoned to satisfy, in his name, the extraordinary demands of indigence and merit.

“ The instant distress of the sick and helpless, of strangers and pilgrims, was relieved by the bounty of each day, and of every hour ; nor would the pontiff indulge himself in a frugal repast till he had sent the dishes from his own table to some objects deserving of his compassion. The misery of the times had reduced the nobles and matrons of Rome to accept, without a blush, the benevolence of the church ; three thousand virgins received their food and raiment from the hand of their benefactor, and many bishops of Italy escaped from the barbarians to the threshold of the Vatican. *Gregory might justly be styled the father of his country* ; and such was the extreme sensibility of his conscience, that, for the death of a beggar who had perished in the streets, he interdicted

\* This term is frequently used, particularly when applied to the Roman pontiffs, to signify a whole province, sometimes, as by the Council of Arles, to signify the entire church.

himself for several days from the exercise of sacerdotal functions."\*

"Gregory awakened the emperor" (Mauritius), continues the same historian; "exposed the guilt and incapacity of the exarch and his inferior ministers; complained that the veterans were withdrawn from Rome for the defence of Spoleto; encouraged the Italians to defend their cities and altars, and *condescended*, in the crisis of danger, to name the tribunes, and to direct the operations of the provincial troops.

"If we may credit his own declarations, it would have been easy for Gregory to exterminate the Lombards by their domestic factions, without leaving a king, a duke, or a count, to save that unfortunate nation from the vengeance of their foes. As a Christian bishop, he preferred the salutary offices of peace; his mediations appeased the tumult of arms; but he was too conscious of the arts of the Greeks, and the passions of the Lombards, to engage his sacred promise for the observance of the truce. Disappointed in the hope of a general and lasting treaty, *he presumed to save his country without the consent of the emperor or the exarch.*

"The sword of the enemy was suspended over Rome; it was averted by the mild eloquence and seasonable gifts of the pontiff, who commanded the respect of the heretics and the barbarians. The merits of Gregory were treated by the Byzantine court with reproach and insult; *but in the attachment of a grateful people, he found the purest reward of a citizen, and the best right of a sovereign.*"

Such is the testimony borne by the most implacable and accomplished enemy of the popes, as to the *arts* by which their secular dominion was founded; their right to the sovereignty is pronounced, even by him, to be "*the best.*"

\* What a monster and minister of Antichrist was this founder of the secular dominion of the popes!

Nor was it alone during his mortal career, that Rome was indebted to St. Gregory. His works lived after him ; but in nothing has he bequeathed such a blessing to his successors as in the example which so many of them have imitated, and which shall be a mirror of every apostolic virtue to them all, until the last shall resign his charge into the hands of the " Prince of pastors."

In all his struggles against the cruel and faithless Lombards, he never ceased to regard them with pastoral solicitude. He kept up a friendly correspondence by letters, embassies, and presents, especially of pious books, with Queen Theodelind, during all the confusion and violence of the war ; and, before his demise, had the consolation to see the foundation of a more peaceful future established in the conversion of the Lombard king and the most of his followers to Catholicity ; while the spiritual conquests effected by him over the Saxons of Britain and the Goths of Spain were the means of securing that immense influence to his successors, which gradually matured into a political preponderancy in all the affairs of Christendom.

Never have the destinies of Europe been so completely risked upon the conduct of a single individual, as in the instance of Pope Gregory the Great ; never, since the times of the apostles, have such claims been established upon the admiration and gratitude of posterity. Under heaven, it is due to this pontiff, that the last gleam of civilization in the west was not extinguished for ever. By saving Rome from the Lombards, and converting England, he prepared the events which gave birth to modern Europe. When he ascended the chair of Peter, nothing but scenes of horrible disorder and violence could his eyes discern through the gloom of barbaric ignorance, that had already settled down, or was fast impending, over the nations. Scarcely a trace of Christianity, or of Roman civilization, had survived the Saxon conquest in Britain ; in France, the labours of St. Maur, and of so



many other apostolic missionaries, had been subverted, almost irretrievably, under a succession of profane and nefarious tyrants of the Merovingian line ; Spain was trampled on by the Goths, who combined the grossest superstitions of paganism with a violent attachment to the Arian heresy ; while Germany, Switzerland, the Low Countries, with the immense regions to the north and east, were still involved in the chaotic night of barbarism and idolatry. As for Italy, partially exempted hitherto from similar misfortune, the ruin of its institutions became so complete under the incessant ravages and barbarous despotism of the Lombards, that a "ferocious ignorance," to use the expression of Muratori, invaded the population. The enmity borne by these tribes to learning and every thing connected with it, was remarkable even in comparison with that of their fellow-savages. The seats of education were everywhere destroyed, the clergy and the monks slaughtered. Monte Cassino, the fountain from which knowledge flowed for so many ages over Europe, was reduced to a heap of ruins, and so remained till restored after a century of desolation by Pope Gregory II.

How Europe was ever to be extricated, if Rome also, the only remaining fortress of light and order, had been plunged in the abyss, it is impossible to conceive. There was no other seat of recuperative principle in the West itself : from the East, there was not a ray of hope. True it is, there were deposited in the numerous libraries, public and private, of Constantinople the richest stores of learning. Learning, too, was still honoured ; but the knowledge of the Byzantines consisted entirely in a rapid species of scholarship. The creative faculty, and the spirit that imparts life and motion to all that is dark and inert around it, the degenerate Greeks had lost. All that the sublimest meditations of philosophy, the noblest inspirations of liberty, had suggested to the founders of Grecian glory : all the lessons afforded by the histories of Athens and of Rome, were within

their reach ; their own manners, their own customs, their national recollections, were of further use to them in explaining what is occasionally obscure to us ; but the heart to understand was wanting. The scholars of Constantinople could furnish, with the minutest accuracy, all the details of the mythology, the geography, the manners, the customs of the ancients. They knew how many thousands of citizens had lived, happy and illustrious, in each state of that very Greece where they now beheld a few hundreds of slaves ; they could point out the exact spot where the brave companions of Miltiades and Themistocles had repulsed the countless forces of the great king ; and they knew each of the laws on which depended that balance of power by which the dignity of man was upheld in those admirable constitutions of antiquity ; yet neither the misery of their country, nor the destructive invasions of their neighbours, nor the shameful tyranny of the eunuchs of the court, had once inspired them with the idea of searching for practical lessons in that antiquity, the historical details of which they knew by heart.\* They studied the fathers of their church, only to give plausibility to the new and odious heresies which they were perpetually inventing. In despite of his bodily infirmities, of the disasters of his times, which pressed in upon him from every side with overwhelming weight, one pope of Rome effected more for the amelioration of mankind, than all the imperial pedants and patriarchs of Byzantium were ever able to effect. Thirty millions of Greeks, the surviving depositaries of ancient wisdom, made not a single step during twelve centuries in any one of the social or physical sciences, unless we except the accident which produced the Greek fire. They loaded the ancient poets with annotations, but they were incapable of treading in their footsteps ; not a comedy or tragedy was written at the foot of the ruins of the theatres of Greece ; no

\* Sismondi, *Fall of Rome*, vol. ii.

epic poem was produced by the worshippers of Homer ! not an ode by those of Pindar ! It was not by a tribe of effete imitators, fainéant sycophants of the fame and the enterprise of the past, that the barbarism of the nations was to be grappled with, vanquished, humanized, and, as it were metamorphosed in its very nature. While the Byzantine patriarch, the vassal of a despotic court, made impotent and insane pretensions to the title of *ecumenical*, or universal bishop, St. Gregory and his successors vigorously exercised the functions of supremacy in the midst of the anarchy of the barbaric world.\* Besides, the simoon of Islamism that was shortly to sweep over the fast-fading empire of Byzantium, was already brooding in the desert. In thirty years from the death of St. Gregory, Bosra, Damascus, Emessa, Balbec, Tyre, Tripoli, Antioch, and Jerusalem itself, had fallen before the apostles of Mohammed ; the successor of Constantine had fled from Asia before the Arab robbers. Instead of bringing aid of any kind to Europe, the Greek emperors never are heard of there, for the future, but as meddlers in theology, attempting by *ectheses* and *types* to dictate what the vicars of Christ were to teach the church ; or, much more frequently, in the attitude of suppliants for help against the Saracens, who kept them hemmed in within their capital.

Had Rome fallen under Lombard sway (and it must have fallen but for St. Gregory), the hope of Christendom was undone. But with incomparable virtue and magnanimity he repelled invasion, without sullyng his Christian meekness ; and in saving his country, he preserved the only seminary for the new race of apostles, who, in little less than a century from his demise, had succeeded to an extent which may well be called miraculous, in converting and humanizing the entire West.

The pontiffs who succeeded St. Gregory, so justly

\* See Life of St. Gregory by John the deacon, with the annotations of the Benedictines.



surnamed the Great, continued to tread faithfully in his footsteps; and the misconduct of the Byzantine court, and of its ministers in Italy, did not fail to perpetuate the necessity for their attending to the public safety as he had done. "When invasion was to be warded off," says Thomasinus, no friend to the secular pretensions of Rome; "when the Lombards were to be propitiated by subsidies, the pontiffs never spared either their treasures or their personal exertions." However, it was not until the outrageous and infatuated tyranny of Leo, the Isaurian, destroyed every tie that could attach the Italian provinces to a union by which they gained nothing but disgrace and misery, that the titles and honours of a power which they had exercised for better than a century began gradually to be given to the popes.

The impulse by which the Greek emperor was driven to such an assault upon the religion of his subjects as involved the empire in anarchy, is attributed to his superstition by Theophanes and Zonaras. The ignorance and prejudices natural to an Isaurian peasant, (which he was, before, by the murder of his imperial master, he obtained the purple,) as well as his subserviency to the Jewish and Mohammedan impostors who surrounded him, render such a view of his conduct probable enough; however, it would appear from the Latin writers, and from Anastasius in particular, that Leo, like most of the potentates who have been zealous for church reformation, was urged, by the lust of plunder, to declare war against holy images, and all other rich adornments of the temple.

But, be this as it may, certain it is, that in the year 725 he issued an edict prohibiting all from showing reverence to images, ordering the sanctuaries throughout his dominions to be stripped; and, as an example to the rest of the empire, he ordered the great golden crucifix which had been erected, by order of Constantine the Great, over the grand entrance of the imperial palace of Constantinople, to be torn down and

broken. A tumultuary rising of the people, especially in the Greek islands, and an ineffectual attempt to storm Constantinople and dethrone the Iconoclast, were the immediate consequence of these proceedings in the East. "But in the West," says Giannone, "and, above all, in Italy, not only was the edict not obeyed, but it excited such indignation among the people, that they broke out into open insurrection. Nay more, the exarch, wishing to carry matters by violence in Ravenna, gave rise to still more serious and ruinous disturbances; for, having issued orders that the images of the churches should be destroyed by main force, such a tumult was raised, that the Ravignani formally revolted from the emperor, and transferred the dominion of their city to Luitprand, the Lombard king."

Charges of treason, insolence, and of fomenting rebellion, are preferred against Pope Gregory II. for his conduct in this crisis, with much more vehemence than consistency,—(seeing that those by whom these charges are preferred are the very same who glory so much in vindicating that liberty of conscience which the pope merely defended,) and with still less regard for the most notorious facts of history. Had there been a shadow of foundation for such accusations, it is not in terms like the following, that a writer, so decidedly hostile to the secular pretensions of the Holy See as Giannone, would have spoken of the conduct of St. Gregory.

"There governed the see of Peter in those times," says the Neapolitan historian, "Pope Gregory, the second of that name. He, although greatly opposed, along with the Roman people, to the designs of Leo, did not cease, nevertheless, to watch over the Greek interests in Italy with great vigilance; straining every nerve, chiefly from that apprehension of the Lombards which he inherited from his predecessors, lest the authority of the emperors should be impaired; and, notwithstanding the most unworthy treatment which he received at Leo's hands, for all that, overlooking

his private wrongs when the public interests were in peril, *he directed all his thoughts to prevent the revolt of the Italians*, and to defend the imperial possessions against the Lombards,"—"e quantunque per aversi egli dovuto aponere agli sforzi di Lione, fosse stato dall' imperadore indegnissimamente trattato, con tutto ciò, post ponendo le private injurie alla publica causa, *dirizzo tutti i suoi pensieri per impedire la rivolta de' popoli d' Italia*, che a lui ubbidivano e per difendere le terre dell' imperio dall' invasione de' Longobardi."\*

"God is my witness," writes the pontiff in his reply to the ukase of the Iconoclast, whom he reminds of the faith pledged by him at his coronation to the see of Peter, and of the orthodox and dutiful tone of his letters of salutation during the ten preceding years; "God is my witness that, year after year, I ceased not to commend and extol your majesty to the potentates of the West by every means in my power, even persuading them to receive your laurel-crowned effigies ('laureata tua') with every mark of respect; but when the impieties perpetrated on the image of their Saviour, by your order, were reported by the Franks, Vandals, Moors, and Goths,—merchants and pilgrims of all lands,—who, being at that time in Constantinople, beheld them; then it was," pursues the Holy Father, "that *they*, having cast down *thy* images, trampled them under foot, and cut and hacked *thy* face,"—"tunc, projecta laureata tua, conculcaverunt et faciam *tuam* conciderunt."

In expostulating with Leo, in the same letter, on the

\* That even Mr. Bowden, the Puseyite biographer of St. Gregory VII., has not yet got rid of the prescriptive tendency to misrepresent the history of the Popes, is strikingly evinced by his version of these transactions. According to him, it is the Pope who incites the Italians to rebel, and causes the exarch to be murdered. "The Pope defended himself," he says, "by methods more consonant with the character of a sovereign than with that of a Christian prelate. *The Italians, inflamed by his addresses, rose in arms in support of his cause. At Ravenna the exarch was slain,*" &c. As is evident from Giannone, already quoted, the facts of the case are reversed in Mr. Bowden's narrative; and this will be more clearly evinced by the sequel.



impolicy of his attempts to usurp the prerogatives of the Holy See, and to destroy its influence, the Pope reminds him that he and his predecessors had ever striven to make their influence subserve the great interests of Christendom, by rendering it a kind of *binding wall* and *common causeway* of intercourse and reciprocity between the East and West.\* So that instead of fomenting disaffection, to inculcate loyalty to the Greek emperors, and, by every means, to prop up their tottering influence, seems to have been, up to this juncture, the great political object of the papacy.

Indignities, however, and unrelenting persecution, were the requital of these services. No less than six attempts were made upon the life of the pontiff by the emissaries of the Isaurian, and defeated by the chivalry of the faithful Romans. Anastasius, or, more probably, some contemporary writer, gives the following detailed account of the sixth attempt by one Euty-chius, a most sanguinary and nefarious minion of the court, despatched with the twofold commission, to pillage the churches and massacre the pontiff with the leading men in Rome. "But after some time," says the writer in Anastasius, "Euty-chius, the patrician, who had been formerly exarch, arrived in Naples with orders from the emperor to put in execution what neither the exarch Paul, nor the imperial equeries, with the other instruments of mischief sent for the same purpose, had been able to effect. Nor did Providence, in this instance either, permit the designs of the imperial emissary to lie hid.

"Notwithstanding all his artifice, it soon became evident to all that his real object was to strip the Christian sanctuaries of their riches, and to destroy and pillage all before him. And when he sent written directions to the Greek authorities in Rome to kill the pontiff, and with him the magnates of the city, this most cruel and insane conspiracy having tran-

\* "Romæ conciliandæ pacis causâ sedere (Pontifices) tanquam parietem intergerinum septumque medianum Orientis et Occidentis."

spired, the very messenger would have fallen a victim to the public indignation, were it not for the extraordinary efforts of the holy father to protect him. However, they pronounced anathema against Eutychius himself, and big and little bound themselves by oath not to suffer a pontiff so zealous for the faith, and such a defender of the church, to be murdered or dragged into exile, but rather to lay down their lives with cheerfulness in his defence. Thus foiled, the next move of Eutychius was to send bribes to the Lombard chiefs, and messengers to their king, in order to detach them from the pontiff. But the Lombards, detesting his perfidy, of which they had the clearest written evidence, joined themselves, like brothers, with the Romans for the defence of the Pope, both parties being emulous to see which should be foremost, and suffer death in so glorious a cause.

"But while all parties were thus vying with each other in devotedness to his person, this venerable father," continues Anastasius, "seemed to place greater reliance on the abundant alms which he ceased not, with a liberal hand, to distribute among the poor. Constant in prayer, in fasting, and in public acts of supplication with his clergy, his hopes rested more firmly on those appeals to Heaven than upon human aid. Not omitting, at the same time, to express his acknowledgments for such zealous exhibitions of attachment on the part of the faithful, his bland and persuasive eloquence ceased not to move all to works of piety towards the Almighty, to be firm in the faith, and not to fall away from loyalty and affection to the Roman empire. By arts such as these did he soothe the excitement and mitigate the calamities occasioned by the insane and violent proceedings of the Iconoclast." \*

\* Doubtless it was by this simple statement of the conduct pursued by St. Gregory II. in this crisis, that the Centuriators of Magdeburg, with their numberless imitators, were inspired to brand him with the "tyranny and ferocity of Antichrist." "Nota hic," say they, "Antichristi tyrannidem et ferocitatem."

While the pontiff thus endeavoured to pour oil upon the waters, he ceased not to vindicate the cause of religion with unshaken intrepidity. In answer to the emperor's threats, that he would cause him to be dragged from Rome to Constantinople, and treated as had been his martyred predecessor, St. Martin, he says :—" Would that it were pleasing to the Almighty to call us to himself by the same path the blessed Martin trod ; not that we are anxious to be rid of life, but, on the contrary, we wish to have it prolonged for the utility of that people who, with the entire West, turn their eyes upon our humble person, with a confidence far greater than our deserts. And as to St. Peter, whose image you threaten to cast down, know that he is regarded by all the kingdoms of the West in some sort as a terrestrial deity ; and that if you shall attempt to make experiment of their devotedness, by the perpetration of any such outrage as you mention, they are prepared, without a doubt, not only to vindicate their own altars, but even to avenge the wrongs inflicted upon their oriental brethren. However, we fervently implore Almighty God to turn your mind from any such puerile and insane attempts. The fidelity of these warlike nations to the prince of the apostles is unbounded, as I have already said ; and we take God to witness that we are innocent of the blood which they will not fail to shed, if you attempt to violate the image and tomb of the apostle. Upon your head be the consequences of this experiment.

" You tyrannically persecute and harass us with the arm of the flesh, and with military violence ; but we, helpless and destitute as we are of terrestrial legions, invoke the Prince of the celestial hosts, Christ Jesus, seated at the right hand of the Father, that he send on thee a devil, according to that of the apostle, ' to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved.' "

But the hatred of the Isaurian against the pope was alike insensible to entreaties and denunciations ;



and unable, with the forces of his own empire, to crush this venerable old man, he at length prevailed upon Luitprand, the declared enemy of his own dominions in Italy, to lay siege to Rome.

St. Gregory made every exertion to be prepared against the storm which he had long anticipated, and had put the city in a state of defence. But in his anxiety to put a stop to the devastation of the country, and the violation of the sacred temples of the Almighty, he determined not to confide in the strength of the walls, or the valour of their defenders, but to present himself as a suppliant before the Lombard king. With this view, he issued forth from the gates of the beleaguered town, with an august retinue of the Roman clergy and nobles, and advanced to the Vatican fields, where the enemy had pitched his tents hard by St. Peter's. Being come into the presence of Luitprand, the pontiff thus addressed him:—

“Were I of impression, O King Luitprand, that the forces by which he carries on this siege belonged to Leo himself, depend upon it I should never have ventured forth to treat of peace or suspension of hostilities. To what purpose would it be to seek the liberation of consecrated shrines and hallowed sepulchres, from one, who had so recently not hesitated to destroy with fire and sword the images of the saints, and of Christ our Lord himself, and to lay his sacrilegious hands upon the sanctuary? But, having been given to understand, that the war, and the conducting of this siege, are placed almost entirely under the direction of a prince who is said by the voice of fame to unite an ardent piety and a profound veneration towards the saints to his other royal virtues, I have not hesitated to come forth into a hostile camp, in order to admonish King Luitprand of some things in which, as it appears to me, the cause of God is vitally concerned.

“I am satisfied that the King is not ignorant that the church of the city which he is preparing to assault was consecrated, in their blood, by the princes of

the apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul ; thereby rendering the soil which contains their sepulchres most venerable to all the nations of the earth. Art thou, then, O king, who hast given such a weight of gold to rescue the relics of one confessor from the danger of being treated with insult by barbarian infidels, and hast translated and enshrined them in your own royal city, with so much pomp and magnificence, prepared, at the bidding of another, to plunder and profane the most august sepulchres, and the temples themselves of the great apostles ?\* Is it not more worthy of thee, O king, to persevere in that course which thou hast marked out for thyself, as a benefactor to religion, than to become the follower of another in his impiety ? More glorious to imitate many great and good princes in preserving the most august of cities, than be led to destroy it by the example of one, and that one a reprobate ? We all have heard of King Attila, so renowned for cruelty ; but his history must be still more familiar to your majesty, whose ancestors have obtained dominion of the regions that were held by the Hun. He, in ages past, ravening for blood and slaughter, came rushing with furious speed to burn Rome. Upon this, St. Leo, who was then pontiff, hastened forward with all speed, and met this king, who was called the ' Scourge of God,' on the banks of the river Po. He implored him not to proceed in his design ; and the invader was so overawed by the appearance of the apostles Peter and Paul, as if looking down upon the conference, that he became docile and obedient to the entreaties of the pontiff, contrary to all expectation. And is it to be credited, that Attila, who, far from being a Catholic, was addicted to rites the most opposite to Christianity, and of a nature, I may say, inhuman, was induced to turn back upon his steps almost at the nod of a Ro-

\* The pontiff alludes to the relics of the great St. Augustine, translated from Sardinia by King Luitprand to Pavia, from which city a portion of them is to be translated to Hippo, in a ship of war given for that purpose by the French king.

man pontiff, and that Luitprand, a king conspicuous, and destined to be renowned with future generations for his devotedness to the Catholic religion, is relentlessly bent upon the destruction of a city which cannot be consumed without giving to the flames those temples and tombs which have been ever regarded by all nations, far and near, and even by those little removed from barbarism, not only with veneration, but with a species of religious horror;—and that Attila retired, overawed by the mere apparition of the apostles, while the sight of their sepulchres, close to which he stands, has no power to move a Catholic king to pity?”

Whether it was from secret impulse of religious emotion, or that he was overawed by the venerable air and aspect of the pontiff, scarce had the latter ended, when the king prostrated himself before him, and promised to retire with his armies from the Roman territories, without doing further mischief. When urged by the exarch to fulfil his engagement with the emperor, which was either to seize the pontiff, and send him captive to Constantinople, or to slay him, he not only recoiled from such a proposal as impious and detestable; but, on the other hand, exerted himself to effect a reconciliation between the exarch and the pope. Then, proceeding to the temple of St. Peter, at that time outside the walls, and hard by the camp, he divested himself of his mantle, diadem, belt, silver cross, and other royal ornaments, placed them before the most august body of St. Peter, and there, as a suppliant, having devoted them to God and to the said prince of the apostles, he returned home with his armies.\*

No : never were charges more unfounded than those of the modern writers, who accuse St. Gregory II. of fomenting disaffection amongst the Italian subjects of the Greek empire, and of usurping power by means of rebellion and intrigue. Never was loyalty proof

\* Hist. de Reg. Ital. Sigon. lib. iii. 20, &c.



against more reiterated and outrageous acts of tyranny, or signalized by more useful and disinterested services. We have already heard how Ravenna was lost; it was by the wisdom and energy of St. Gregory it was recovered from the Lombards and restored to the Greeks again. In like manner, it was by him that Cuma was recovered; and when a pretender to the purple arose in Tuscany, the wretched Eutychius was forced to supplicate the influence of the pontiff, whom he had so long laboured to destroy, in order to put down the insurrection.

In fact, up to the grant of Pepin,—several years later than this,—the jurisdiction of the Greek emperors continued to be recognised in Rome, while, as theretofore, the burden of the government devolved entirely upon the popes. “Although from what we have seen,” says Muratori, “the Greek emperors still had their ministers in Rome, it would seem that the principal authority of the government was vested in the pontiffs, who, by the force and majesty of their station, and by that escort of virtues which surrounded them, wielded a placid sway over the city and dukedom, defending them with vigour from the Lombard grasp, whenever occasion required it.”\* Nor was it until every prospect of the often-solicited, long promised, but never forthcoming aid from Constantinople had vanished, that Pope Stephen, the second in succession from St. Gregory, took the resolution of seeking for help and protection against these restless and implacable enemies beyond the Alps. “He sent letters and legates to the Byzantine court,” says Muratori, “to implore his august sovereign that, in pursuance of so many promises already made, he would expedite into Italy an army, capable, not only

\* “Benchè i Greci imperadori tenessero in Roma i loro ministri, pure la principale autorità del governo sembra, che fosse collocata ne’ Romani Pontifici, i quali colla forza e maestà del loro grado, e colla scorta delle loro virtù, placidamente reggevano quella città e ducato, difendendolo poi vigorosamente nelle occasioni dall’unghe de’ Lombardi.”—*Ann.* 752.

of defending the Roman dukedom against the Lombards, but to drive them out from all their other usurpations.”\*

But these representations of Pope Stephen, like those of his predecessors, were to no purpose. Rome and Italy were abandoned to their fate by the imbecile Greeks, until, by the indomitable patriotism and sacrifices of the venerable pontiff, both had been rescued from the invader's grasp; and *then* the imperial envoys appear in the camp of Pepin, with gorgeous presents, and with still more gorgeous promises, in order to induce the generous Frank to restore to the empire the territories which his sword had won from the Lombards, or, in any case, not to grant the exarchate and Pentapolis to the popes. It was then that King Pepin made solemn oath, that it was not for any earthly consideration he had so often exposed himself in the field of battle during this war, but solely through love of St. Peter, and for the remission of his sins; asserting, moreover, that for all this world's treasures, he would not revoke what he had once made an offering of to the blessed apostles.†

It was long since every claim upon the fealty of the Italians had been forfeited by the emperors of the East. To their tyrannical and imbecile rule, they were indebted for the series of disasters consequent upon the Lombard invasion, the bitterest, the most protracted, and pernicious in the consequences, of all they had suffered.

After cutting his way back to Ostia through the ambuscade of the Goths, Belisarius had returned, and the vacant space of the eternal city was once more the scene of destruction and furious warfare; for scarcely had the Greeks thrown up some hasty defences round the ancient circuit of the walls, by blocking up, with every thing they could seize, the gates and the immense ruptures made in the fortifications

\* Vid. Muratori, ann. 753, p. 47.

† “Asserens et hoc, quod nulla eum thesauri copia suadere valeret, ut quod semel beato Petro obtulit, auferret.”—*Baron.* ann. 755, No. 25.

by the Goths, than Totila, raging like a lion, returned to the charge, in order to obliterate the disgrace which he had incurred, by leaving a station so renowned without a garrison. This was in the year 547. He was beaten off by Belisarius; but in 549 he effected his purpose, and the Goths were masters of the ruins, until, after the defeat and death of Totila, A.D. 552, the Greeks recovered them under the command of the eunuch Narses. Under his sway as exarch, the Romans soon had reason to sigh for the less intolerable oppression and rapacity of the Goths. They complained to the court of Constantinople.\* The eunuch became infuriated: and despite of all the entreaties of Pope John III., who followed him as far as Naples, he brought destruction on Italy, by inviting the Lombards to fall upon the unfortunate country at a time when it was exhausted by a fearful pestilence, and by his own oppressions as exarch. And far from even seconding the efforts of St. Gregory the Great and his successors to make head against the devastating hordes thus introduced into the heart of the country, the minions of the Greek court came with a view "not to serve the interests or mitigate the sufferings of the Italians, but, as it were, to suck their very blood,"—"non per far del bene ai popoli," says Muratori, "*ma per ismugnere il loro sangue.*"

Again and again they plundered the treasures, and stripped the most venerable sanctuaries of the Roman church; they attempted to traffic in the apostolic office, and laid violent hands, more than once, on the anointed vicars of Christ; and when unable, on account of their own impotence, to perpetrate their schemes of avarice, or fanaticism, or revenge, they never hesitated to league themselves with the public enemy, in order to make war upon those whom they pretended to call their subjects. Yet, with all this,

\* "I Romani scrissero a Giustino Augusto, e a Sofia sua moglie, rappresentando d'essere sì maltrattati ed oppressi da *Narsete*, che meglio stavano sotto i Goti, che sotto di lui."—*Murat.* ann. 567. See also Anastasius, vit. Johan. III.



the rule of the Byzantine Cæsars was not cast off by the Italians; it became effete, and was permitted to drop from the hands of those who should have held it. The provinces, thus abandoned, were driven to take measures for their own defence.\* Unable, however, of themselves, to cope with the invaders, and despairing of any help from the East; what course remained but that which was taken, to call in the valiant chief, who was not more renowned for his prowess as a warrior, than for his devotion to the apostolic see? And it is quite as unworthy of the probity and candour of Muratori, as it is in keeping with his theories relative to the secular dominion of the popes, to pretend, that when Pepin made his celebrated "donation," he was generous at the expense of the Greek emperors; because he must have known, that according to the acknowledged principles of the "jus gentium," the provinces won by Pepin from the Lombards were *his* by right of conquest. "Beyond all controversy," says Grotius, "if we regard the law of nations, what is wrested by us from enemies, cannot be reclaimed by those who were in possession before those enemies, but who were ousted by the fortune of war."† Now this was precisely the case of the Greeks. We have seen how they permitted Italy to be ravaged and usurped by the Lombards, and how ineffectual were the repeated entreaties of the popes for aid to resist and dispossess the invaders. Beyond all question, Ravenna and the Pentapolis were lost to *them*, before ever Pepin set foot in Italy. These provinces, so far as they were concerned, were, to all intents and purposes, "bona derelicta." Surely the Greeks had no claim upon the military services of the Frank king! When, therefore, that valiant warrior drove out the tyrannical invaders of those provinces, at the prayer of the aboriginal possessors, what pretensions had the

\* "Elegendosi i proprii duci, capi, e governatori; e una tal carica in Roma e nel suo ducato fu da quel tempo appresso il Romano Pontefice."—*Orsi, Dissertat. &c.*

† Vide Fontanini, ap. Murat. ann. 755, p. 60. Roman edit.

Byzantines to step in and claim the spoil, or prevent the pontiffs from being formally invested, by the victor, with a sovereignty, the duties of which they had proved themselves so eminently qualified to discharge? Hence, never was title more valid or just, than that which gave to the successors of St. Peter, in the year of our Lord 755, the sovereignty of the exarchate and the Pentapolis, of Spoleto, some portions of Tuscany, and of the entire dukedom of Rome;—that fertile, populous, and beautifully diversified tract of peerless Italy, which constitutes the territory of the Roman pontiff of the present day.

In pausing to take a retrospective glance from this point, it is impossible not to be struck with the uniformity with which secular influence continued to be forced upon the pontiffs, as if by an overruling necessity that warped and constrained events the most unpromising to bring about this consummation. Even Gibbon confesses that the popes were *compelled* to reign. They, no doubt, like their contemporaries of every class, were inclined to view the removal of the seat of empire from the “Seven Hills” to the Bosphorus as a calamity; yet that step was indispensable to the independence of the supreme pastor, and, according to the language of a very ancient document, was designedly brought about by Providence. “Because it was not meet,” says this writer, “that the emperor of the earth should hold his sway in that place, where the prince of the hierarchy and the capital of the Christian religion were constituted by heaven’s eternal Emperor.”

Surely those disasters which *forced* St. Gregory the Great into a political importance from which his successors were never afterwards able to recede, had not been desiderated by him. Did Pope St. Gregory II. court those outrageous attempts of the Isaurian upon his own life and the religious liberties of the Italians, by which he was *forced* into the position of an independent prince? Look again to the next stride in power made under Pope Stephen. The pontiff seems to

battle, with might and main, against the destiny which pushes him towards the throne. First, he strives, by the sacrifice of immense treasures, to buy off the invader; he next implores assistance from Constantinople. Disappointed of all earthly succour, barefooted and bearing a heavy cross, like his divine Master, he endeavours by public processions and penitential austerities to propitiate the help of Heaven. He exposes his venerable person to the fury of the raging and perfidious Lombard in Pavia, and, humbling his hoary head to the dust, beseeches him to spare his people, and no longer to invade and usurp the patrimony of St. Peter, or rather, of the poor. Nor is it until this last effort proves fruitless, that the aged pontiff, at the risk of his life from the Lombards, who pursue and hem him in on every side, and in spite of the Alpine storms of mid-winter, hastens to supplicate the assistance of the French king. And when the cause of the church is espoused by Pepin, he will not hear of an appeal to arms, until every effort that could suggest itself in order to adjust matters by negotiation had failed. "To the letters sent by King Pepin to Astolphus, others were united from Pope Stephen himself," says Muratori, "conjuring him to spare the shedding of Christian blood; but all was in vain; words of menace and defiance were the only answer that either of them received from the rancorous and exasperated Lombard."\*

Astolphus assumed a milder tone, however, after his defeat; "and well for him," says Muratori, "that the merciful pontiff, although eager for his conversion, had no wish for his ruin. At his instance, the victorious Pepin withdrew his forces across the Alps; but Astolphus, instead of restoring the estates of the church, as he had sworn to do, marched against Rome; laying waste its environs, carrying away even the sacred relics of the saints from all the churches without the walls, and harassing the city itself with

\* "*Infellonito Astolfo.*"



repeated assaults.”\* And thus, out of another persecution as cruel and unprovoked as that which gained for St. Gregory II. the Roman dukedom, the grant of the exarchate and the other provinces was derived by Pope Stephen, for it was after crossing the Alps *a second time*, and defeating the perfidious Astolphus, that Pepin made the renowned “donation” to St. Peter.

But it is in the last epoch of development intervening between the grant of Pepin, in 755, and the coronation of Charlemagne, in the year 800, that the hand which brought about the secular independence of the see of Peter becomes most strikingly manifest in its operations.

True it is, that the sceptre of sovereignty was now wielded by the popes over the diversified and fruitful territory extending from the little town of Luna, in Upper Tuscany, and the right bank of the Po, to the southern boundaries of Latium, besides their estates in Sicily, Istria, Sardinia, the south of France, and the Cottian Alps; but it was evident, nevertheless, that both the integrity of these states, the independence from coercion of the Holy See, and the personal safety of the pontiffs, were in jeopardy, while ever far from their French protectors, they continued to be placed between two such unscrupulous and inveterate enemies,—the Greeks on the Neapolitan, the Lombards on the northern frontier; and that, to guarantee the perfect freedom of the spiritual kingdom by guaranteeing the secular independence of the supreme head, it was not only requisite that the Lombard kingdom should be annihilated, but that the tyrannical pretensions of the Byzantine court, with regard to the papacy, should be effectually set aside. This will not be questioned by any one who dispa-

\* “E buono per lui che il misericordioso papa bramava bensì di lui correzione ma non già la rovina—Astolfo passò al assedio di Roma con dare il guasto ai contorni, asportare i corpi dei santi ritrovati nella chiese fuori della città, e tormentare con frequenti assalti la città medesima.”—*Muratori*.

sionately considers the miserable vassalage, the plunderings, the persecutions, to which the holy see had been subjected, from the time that the conquests of Belisarius transferred the dominion of Rome, and the greater part of Italy, from the Goths to the Greek emperors, in the person of Justinian.

Their treatment of Pope Silverius,—his cruel expulsion from Rome,—his exile and assassination already noticed,—formed an appropriate introduction to this tissue of sacrilege and villany; but the greatest, perhaps, because the most enduring, hardship the holy see had to suffer from the Greek emperors, arose out of the perpetuation, on their part, of the abuse of a veto introduced by the Arian Goths, and the pretension to a right of confirmation on the election of each successive pope. Frequent, long-protracted, and always disastrous, vacancies of the apostolic see were the consequence.\* Thus, after the death of John III., contemporary of Narses the first exarch, (whom we have seen him following as far as Naples, with a view to avert the calling in of the Lombards,) the holy see remained vacant ten months and three days.† Again, in 605, soon after the demise of St. Gregory the Great, the see is vacant for a year.‡ Again, in 608, a vacancy of ten months and many days,—“varj giorni.” After the death of Pope Honorius, on the 12th of October, 638, “the holy see,” says Muratori, “was a long time vacant; for although the clergy, with the senate and people of Rome, proceeded without delay to the election of a successor, who was Severinus, the consent of the emperor was delayed for a year and seven months.”§

It was during this long interregnum that Isaac, the Greek exarch, seized so favourable an opportunity to plunder the widowed church. He had an understand-

\* Vid. Orsi, *Istoria Eccl.* l. xliii. num. xxvii.

† “Dieci mesi e tre giorni.”

‡ “Per tutto quest anno stette vacante la cattedra di San Pietro.”

§ Muratori, ann. 638.

ing on this subject with Mauritius, the Byzantine envoy or resident at Rome, who one day that the garrison became clamorous for their pay, which had been designedly withheld, informed them that he had nothing to give them; and then added, that in the treasury of the Lateran, there was a prodigious quantity of money hoarded up by Pope Honorius—money which should not have been left idly in the pope's coffers, he said, while the brave men were in want, on whom devolved the defence and security of the city. Nay, he went so far as to assure them, that various remittances sent by the emperor for their use had been laid up, amongst the rest, by his holiness. Nothing more was required to make every soldier of the garrison his own paymaster. They flew to the Lateran palace, and not being able to effect an entrance into the treasury, the domestics of Severinus, the pope elect, making resistance, they laid siege to the place for three days, at the end of which, Mauritius finally succeeded in forcing his way. Apprized of this, Isaac hastened to Rome, and, under a variety of pretexts, there being no one to resist him, exiled the principal of the clergy, and then entered the treasury, which he continued to ransack and plunder for eight whole days, taking care to send a portion of the booty to his imperial master.\*

Tired, at length, of such sacrilegious tyranny, and fearing to leave the election of the great guardian of the deposite of the faith depending on a court devoted to the heresy of the Monothelites, at that time agitating the oriental church, the Roman clergy and people, on the demise of Pope Theodore,† proceeded to the election of a successor, when Martin of Todi was chosen and consecrated, without waiting for the Byzantine placitum. "This pontiff," says Muratori, "one of the most distinguished for striking qualities and vigour that ever filled the chair of Peter, although

\* The particulars may be seen in the contemporary biographer of Pope Severinus, in the collection of Anastasius.

† 13th of May, 649.



aware of the penalties denounced in the type or edict of Constantius against all who refused to subscribe to Monothelism, lost no time in convening a council of the Italian bishops. They met in the Lateran, on the 5th of October in the same year, to the number of one hundred and five, including those of Sicily and Sardinia, and were still sitting when Olympias arrived in Rome. This new exarch had been recently despatched from Constantinople with orders to enforce submission to the *type* throughout Italy, and, if thwarted in that design, to lay hands on Pope Martin, either by fraud or force. Arrived in Rome, he found that the pontiff and his council, far from quailing before the threats of imperial vengeance, had unanimously condemned the Monothelite heresy, with the ecthesis of Heraclius, as well as the new creed promulgated by Constantius. For a long time the fidelity of the Romans frustrated all the efforts of the exarch against the pontiff. At length, in the year 652, he sought to effect by the hand of an assassin, what he durst not openly attempt, not only for fear of the people, but of the army also, which was zealously devoted to the pope. Feigning a devotion to receive the blessed eucharist from the pontiff's own hand, he went to assist at his mass, having at the same time given orders to one of his guards to stab the holy father when in the act of administering the sacrament. But the Almighty did not permit so horrid an atrocity; the soldier afterwards attesting upon oath, that he could not see the pope, either when he gave the kiss of peace to the exarch, or when he administered the blessed eucharist."\*

Olympias having failed in his murderous intent, a new exarch, Calliopas, was sent into Italy, with peremptory orders to seize Pope Martin by force. Calliopas arrived in Rome at the head of a large body of troops, June 15th, 653.

\* "Iniqui Greci! non si può qui non esclamare," says Muratori, "e di lungo mano più iniqui per quello che reconteremo."—An. 652.

The pontiff, though well aware of his designs, sent his clergy to present the salutations due to the representative of his sovereign, not being able to go in person, on account of a severe and protracted illness. To this deputation the Greek expressed how anxious he was to present his personal homage to the holy father, excusing himself, on the score of fatigue, from doing so until the next Sunday. This, however, he failed to do, fearing that the concourse of people would be too great to permit the execution of his design. But, on the Monday, he sent to complain to the pope, that munitions of war had been provided in the Lateran palace, as if to ward off a violence to which there was not the slightest intention of resorting. But this was only a pretence to gain information ; and, as soon as it was ascertained by his spies that no preparations for defence had been made, he invested the palace with his squadrons in most formidable array. Having got admission to the presence of the pontiff, who lay stretched on his sick bed before the altar of the Basilica, he produced an imperial mandate to the clergy, to proceed to a new election, pretending that Martin was to be looked upon as deposed, having, he said, been intruded into the see. The clergy and domestics were inclined to show resistance ; but the holy father, who abhorred every species of violence, and had rather die ten times over than be the cause of bloodshed, forbade the slightest attempt of the kind. He was, therefore, carried forth amidst the cries of the clergy, who repeatedly exclaimed, " Be he anathema who shall say or believe that Pope Martin hath changed, or ever will be induced to alter, one particle of the faith, or that he will not be faithful unto death in the orthodox belief."

Calliopas had his victim carried on board a small vessel in the Tiber, on the 19th of July, and conveyed, in the first instance, to Misenum, thence to Calabria. After casting anchor at several of the Greek islands, during a voyage of three months, they came at length to Naxos in the Archipelago, where there

was a delay of several months more. It would be difficult to describe the sufferings of the venerable pontiff during all this time. Deprived almost of the common necessities, languishing in sickness, and confined in the hold of a miserable vessel, from which he was not permitted to disembark even once, he suffered during the entire time from dysentery, extreme exhaustion, and sea-sickness, from which he had scarcely an interval of respite. The clergy, and the faithful of the Greek islands at which the vessel touched, used to flock from all sides, to testify their homage and compassion; but they were fiercely repulsed by the guards, who denounced as an enemy to the emperor whoever was a friend to Pope Martin; at the same time seizing the gifts and presents that were brought for the holy confessor's use. "Such was the condition to which this innocent and patient sufferer was reduced," says the historian, "that one cannot think of it without being excited to indignation, both against the despot who ordered, and the vile minions who executed, such outrage upon a Roman pontiff so venerated by the entire church of God."

From the authentic narrative of the sufferings of St. Martin,\* we collect that he was conveyed from the isle of Naxos to Constantinople, on the 17th of September, 654. He was immediately cast into a dungeon, and prevented from seeing or conversing with any one whatsoever for three months. On the 19th of December, he was submitted to examination by the chancellor or fiscal of the imperial court, by whom a variety of false accusations were brought against him. Perceiving their object, the intrepid pontiff conjured the imperial officers to do with him, at once, what he knew they were bent upon effecting, without going through the mockery of a trial; and thereby procure for him a great recompense in heaven. By order of the emperor, he was then carried in a chair, (he not being able to walk, or so much as to stand,) into an

\* Labbè, Concilior. tom. iv. p. 67.



outer piazza where there was an immense concourse of people. There the pallium and other pontifical ornaments and robes were taken off him by the soldiers, so that he remained almost naked. Then, placing a collar of iron round his neck, he was dragged from the palace through the entire city, chained to the jailer, or hangman, as if he were a culprit going to execution. Amidst so many outrages and sufferings, the venerable martyr never lost his serenity, and the greater part of the multitude wept aloud, and mourned over such a spectacle of iniquity. Dragged back to his dungeon, he continued to be treated with the greatest barbarity, exposed to every hardship and privation, until, at length, he was summoned, from the place of his exile in the Chersonesus, to receive the immortal recompense of his trials for the faith.”\*

In the year 663, and during the reign of Pope Vitalian, the Greek emperor, Constantius, honoured Rome with his presence ; and, after tarrying there for twelve days, “took leave of the pope,” says the annalist, “carrying away with him all the bronzes which still decorated that once empress-city, even to the lamina that covered the dome of St. Mary of Martyrs, better known as the Pantheon.”†

To the catalogue of outrages which St. Gregory II. had to suffer at the hands of Leo the Iconoclast, must be added the confiscation of all the possessions of the Roman church which were within his grasp, in Sicily, Magna Græcia, and the violent rending of Illyricum from the patriarchate of the West.‡ Illyricum, which

\* See Muratori, ad Ann. and the original life in Anastasius.

† Muratori, ann. 663.

‡ Between the parent and daughter churches, a certain relationship of subordination and reverence had been recognised from the first. Thus did the see of Antioch, established by St. Peter, preside over the Asiatic churches, while those of Egypt, the Pentapolis, and Libya, were subject to Alexandria, founded by his disciple St. Mark. In the West, this dignity, conjointly with their supremacy over the universal church, was enjoyed by the pontiffs of Rome,—the parent church of the entire West : *i. e.*, of Italy and the surrounding

comprehend the two great dioceses of Decia and Macedonia, had always appertained to the patriarchal jurisdiction of the popes. The bishop of Thessalonica, from the time of Pope Damasus, had acted as their vicar, and without his approbation no bishop could be canonically instituted in any see belonging to the provinces of Dardania and Prævalitana, of Mæsia, the two Decias, composing the first division of Illyricum, or of the second division, which embraced Macedonia, the Old and New Epirus, Achaia, Thessaly, and Crete: he also had the power delegated to him of convening synods of all these countries,—the greater causes, however, and appeals, as from all other provinces of the church, being reserved to the apostolic see. Attempts had been made as early as the reign of Theodosius the younger to draw these provinces, or some portions of them, into the newly-instituted patriarchate of Constantinople: but the remonstrances of the holy see, supported by the strong representations of the western emperor, Arcadius, to his brother, had the desired effect: and it was reserved for Leo, the Isaurian, to add this to his other acts of sacrilegious rapine and injustice. In a word, as far as their contemptible resources would allow them, the despots who had enslaved religion in Greece and the East never ceased to carry on a war of annoyance and perfidy against the apostolic see, until at length the revival of the western empire by Charlemagne, or rather by Pope Leo III., at once put an end to their sacrilegious pretensions, and guaranteed to the successors of St. Peter the free exercise of their ecclesiastical supremacy.\* The singular revolutions by which this consummation was finally brought about cannot but be considered providential.

islands, of Gaul, Illyricum, Spain, Africa, Britain, and of Ireland, when converted by missionaries from Pope Celestine, A.D. 430. This division of provinces had been ratified by the great council of Nice in its sixth canon. The provinces began to be called patriarchates from the time of the council of Chalcedon, by which Pope Leo the Great was addressed as patriarch of the universal church. See Döllinger's Church Hist. Transl. by Dr. Cox, vol. ii. sec. 4.

\* Vid. Muratori, ann. 759, p. 80; ann. 762, p. 87.

## CHAPTER IV.

"Videtur et imperii nobilissimi eminentissimum culmen ad sepulchrum piscatoris Petri submisso diademate supplicare."—*S. August. Epist. xlii.*

"Laying aside their pride and pomp, the kings, the nobility, the greatest conquerors of the world, fall prostrate before the tombs of a tent-maker and a fisherman."—*St. John Chrysost. Hom. xvi. in ii. ad Cor.*

"THE truce, granted to the cities of Italy depending on the Greek empire, having expired in the year 749, the city of Perugia," says Muratori, "was immediately beleaguered by Rachis, the Lombard king; he likewise menaced to let loose his fury upon the entire extent of the Pentapolis. These disastrous tidings had no sooner reached the ears of Pope Zachary, who had succeeded to Gregory III., than with a number of prelates and magnates of Rome, he hastened to Perugia, and by moving entreaties so mollified the barbarian, that he consented to raise the siege. Nay more, with such a contempt for the former objects of his ambition, and with such profound remorse for his past career of blood and rapacity, did the words of the venerable pontiff inspire him, that he abdicated the throne shortly after; came to Rome; and, having received the monastic habit at the hands of Zachary, retired to the monastery of Mount Cassino; while Tassia, his queen, and her royal daughters, became nuns, and founded the convent of Piombaruola. Astolphus, who obtained the throne thus vacated, happening to die without issue, in the year 766, a violent contest for the succession arose amongst several pretenders. The scale seemed to incline in favour of Desiderius, duke of either Istria or Tuscany, until, to his great alarm, and the general surprise, the royal Benedictine of Monte Cassino declared his wish to



abdicate the tonsure, and again resume the 'iron crown.' Then it was," continues Muratori, "that no other resource was left to Desiderius, than to throw himself upon the successor of St. Zachary, Pope Stephen II.: making at the same time unbounded profession of his willingness and anxiety to see regarded as inviolate the donation of King Pepin, and all the cities and territories belonging to it, still detained by the Lombards, restored. Through the influence of the pontiff, the royal monk was dissuaded from violating his solemn vows; but Desiderius, immediately he got the power to perform them, seemed entirely to forget his promises. However, he was ever ready with his tribute of fair words and plausible excuses, until the death of Pepin seemed to leave the patrimony of St. Peter without protection. But no sooner had he become secure of that event, than in the year 772, he broke in upon the estates of the church; giving up to sack, slaughter, and conflagration, the whole country, towns and cities, castles and farm-houses, from Sinigaglia, on the Adriatic, on by Montefeltro, Urbino, Gubbio, through Roman Tuscany, where the ashes of Bieda were extinguished in the blood of its people; nor was the career of devastation checked, until the ravager had possessed himself of the castle of Otricoli within sight of Rome. All' udir questo," observes Muratori, "chi cercasse *delicatezza di coscienza*, e prudenza nel re Desiderio, non le troverebbe." "Delicacy of conscience" indeed! The humour is exquisite, that places "*delicatezza di coscienza*," in the bosom intimacy of this robber king. Nor, indeed, as the result established, was the Lombard over wise, either. Having secured the plundered provinces by strong garrisons, he returned to Pavia, to prepare for new aggressions; and in the opening of the following year, Pope Adrian I. and his people were alarmed at the intelligence, that he was moving down at the head of his armies upon Rome. The courageous pontiff hastened to provide against the coming storm. The troops were called in from Cam-

pania, Tuscany, Perugia, and from some of the towns beyond the Apennines: the basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul being outside the city walls, were divested of whatsoever might tempt too strongly the *delicacy* of the Lombard conscience: the Vatican was strongly barricaded from within by bars of iron. When these preparations were complete, Eustrazius, Andreas, and Theodosius, bishops of Albano, Palestrina, and Tivoli, were sent forward to meet the invader, with the intimation, that the sentence of excommunication would be fulminated against him, if he presumed to cross, without the pope's consent, the confines of the Roman duchy. He had already arrived at Viterbo, when the legates met him, with what Muratori calls their "disgustosa ambasciata." That embassy had the desired effect, however. Desiderius had not the hardihood to advance farther, but "retired," says the historian, "with great reverence, and in confusion."\*

There arrived, however, in Rome soon after this, as ambassadors from King Charles, (who had succeeded his father, Pepin-le-bref, both in his estates and in the protectorate of the church,) a bishop named Gregory, Gulford, an abbot, and Albinus, a nobleman in high favour with the said king. Their chief errand was to ascertain, if the Lombard, (as he had stated to King Charles,) had really made restitution of the states belonging to St. Peter, of which he had so long retained the unjust possession. They soon discovered his averments, on this head, to be utterly without foundation. However, in returning to France, they presented themselves at the court of Pavia, and used every argument and exhortation to persuade the usurper to do justice: but all was to no effect. Even after their return a new embassy was sent into Lombardy, by Charles, with offers of fourteen thousand pounds of gold, as an inducement to Desiderius to fulfil what he had bound himself to by so

\* "Era già pervenuto Desiderio a Viterbo, e quivi, intesa questa disgustosa ambasciata, non ardì di andare più inanzi, e con gran riverenza e confusione se ne tornò indietro."—*Muratori*, ann. 773.

many oaths and solemn engagements; but malice blinded him to the ruin he was bringing on his nation and on himself. It was now evident, that nothing but the strong arm of force could restrain this perfidious prince from his unjust designs against Rome, or wrest from his grasp the estates of St. Peter, and of the poor. King Charles, accordingly, concentrated his forces in Geneva; resolved to pass into Italy; and having ascertained that Desiderius had taken post at Chusi, and was fortifying the passes of Mount Cenis, he hastened to cross the Alps by that route himself, with the main body, directing his generals to lead the rest of his army by the route of Monte Giove. But before coming to hostilities, he tried another embassy, offering to be content with a renewal of former stipulations, provided three hostages were given for their performance. "*Ma ancor questo venero indarno,*" says Muratori. The result of the encounter that ensued, on this final rejection of every proposal of peace by Desiderius, was, that the Alpine passes were carried, the Lombards routed, and the incorrigible aggressor cooped up within his capital.

It was pending the siege, or the blockade rather, of Pavia, (commenced, probably, towards the autumn of 773,) that Charles paid his first visit to Rome. His object in this was twofold;—to celebrate the great festival of Easter in the holy city, and to confer with Pope Adrian, for whom he cherished the highest veneration and friendship. At Novi, thirty miles from the city, he was met by an august embassy of Roman senators, sent to salute him on the part of his holiness and the Roman people; all the military forces of the papal states, with banners flying and military music, advanced as far as the third mile stone, and drew up in grand array to receive the king of the Franks; while all the children of the schools proceeded to meet him in procession; singing hymns, and bearing branches of olive in their hands. Close to the gates, he was met by the Roman clergy and the religious orders. At the sight of the crosses and sacred



gónfalons borne before them, the king dismounted, walked with his great officers uncovered and on foot, until he entered the great atrium of St. Peter's. There arrived, instead of mounting, on foot, the flight of steps leading to the platform before the vestibule, where the pope with his court and a vast concourse of the Roman people expected him, he ascended them upon bended knees, kissing each step devoutly, as he advanced. The pontiff embraced the royal hero with cordial affection, and then conducted him by the hand, amidst canticles and hymns of jubilee and triumph, to return thanks at the confession, or shrine, of St. Peter. On the Wednesday of Easter week, he confirmed the donation of his father, King Pepin, and deposited the diploma, or deed of donation, upon the altar of the apostle.

It is on this occasion that Anastasius gives us the enumeration of the provinces of which it consisted. Ravenna, Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, Cesena, Sinigaglia, Jesi, Forlimpopoli, Forli, with the castle of Sussubio, (at present, the town of Bertinoro,) Montefeltro, Acerragio, Monte de Lucaro, Serra, Castel di San Mariano, (most probably the present miniature republic of San Marino,) Bobio, (not that of Liguria,) Urbino, Cagli, Luceolo, Gubbio, Comacchio, and the city of Narni. In addition to these, all included in the gift of Pepin, we find mention of the provinces of Venezia, Istria, the dukedoms of Spoleto and Benevento, Parma, Reggio, Mantua, Montefelice, and the island of Corsica.\* We learn from the same writer, that some of those of Spoleto and Rieti came to Rome, entreating to be shaved, "*alla maniera de' Romani*," in token of their subjection to the pope, rather than to the Lombards. This was even before

\* Anast. in vit. Adrian I. See also Muratori, ann. 755 and 774, Sigon. de Reg. Ital. "The mysterious circle," says Gibbon, i.e. the present extent of the papal territory, "was enlarged to an indefinite extent, by the verbal or written donation of Charlemagne, who, in the first transports of his victory, despoiled himself and the Greek emperors of the cities and islands which had formerly been annexed to the exarchate," ch. xlix. p. 210. vol. vi.

Desiderius had been defeated and put to flight from the Alps; but, when that news was spread, and that the Spoletini who had served under him had returned home, the entire dukedom had recourse to the pope, with an humble petition to be taken into the service of St. Peter: "e di farle tosare alla Romana." In like manner, those of the duchy of Fermo, with those of Osimo, Ancona, and of Castel' di Felicità, gave themselves up to St. Peter.\*

Desiderius was at length compelled to surrender at discretion, and was led captive from Pavia into France, with Ansa his queen. According to some ancient writers, he was placed in the safe keeping of Agilfred, bishop of Liege, where he ended his days, after sincere repentance; but, if we may credit the monk of St. Gall, it was in the monastery of Corbie he was confined, and there he lived for some years, and died in peace: "ubi in vigiliis, et orationibus, et jejuniis, et multis bonis operibus, permansit usque ad diem obitus sui."† Pagi thinks he was sent to Liege in the first instance, and from thence to Corbie; where, in his person, the

\* These are not the only instances of that eagerness, with which the Italian towns and provinces of those times sought to enrol themselves under the sovereignty of the pontiffs; and a similar disposition will make its appearance as we proceed, even among foreign nations. A very ample proof of the popularity enjoyed by the popes among their own subjects is given by Muratori, under the year 763, and in the pontificate of Paul I., from a letter of the senate and Roman people to King Pepin. After making their acknowledgments to "Pepin, patrician of the Romans," for having espoused the defence of the true faith, then threatened by the Greeks, &c., they take occasion to expatiate on the firmness and unalterable affection of their loyalty towards their sovereign, most blessed father, and most excellent pastor, Pope Paul:—"E protestano d'essere fermi, e fedeli servi della santa chiesa di Dio, e de beatissimo padre, e Signor' nostro Paulo papa, perchè egli e nostro padre, ed ottimo pastore, e non cessa di operare per la nostra salute, siccome ancor fece papa Stefano suo fratello, con governar' noi come peccorelle ragionevoli a lui consegnate da Dio, mostrandosi sempre misericordioso, e imitatore di san' Pietro, di cui e vicario." This letter is the thirty-sixth of the Caroline letters. It is given entire by both Cenni and Pagi, ann. 757, with critical annotations.

† Histor. apud Goldast. tom. i. Ren. Alaman.

turbulent dynasty of the Lombards became extinct, after having desolated Italy, and held the pontiffs and their people in direful alarm and affliction, for the space of upwards of two hundred years.\*

King Charles paid a second visit to Rome in 781, when his son Carloman, so called after his uncle, had his name changed to Pepin, and was crowned king of Italy by Pope Adrian. In this, and still more particularly in a third visit, in 787, his great object was to procure the services of able professors, and other assistance towards the carrying out of his grand project for the revival of letters, which had sunk into most deplorable neglect throughout his vast dominions:—"Ante ipsum enim dominum regem Carolum," says one of his biographers, "in Galliâ nullum studium fuerat liberaliûm artiûm." He brought with him some masters of the "canto firmo," or, as it is more usually called, from the great pontiffs by whose care it was brought to perfection, the Gregorian chant; besides professors of the various branches of learning, amongst whom was the celebrated Alcuin, who had come to Rome on behalf of his venerable patron, Egbert, archbishop of York, to procure the pallium from Pope Adrian.† By the exertions of the professors thus procured, and of those who were attracted from other quarters by the invitations and munificence of Charlemagne, a bright and happy change in the aspect of Europe began, ere long, to become discernible; although the advantages resulting from so many obscure and irksome labours were reaped in much greater abundance by the succeeding age. "The opening of his reign," say the Benedictines of St. Maur, "resembled the rising sun, which at first merely penetrating the mists of ignorance, scarcely reached its meridian before it had dispersed them, and beamed with unclouded light on the sciences."

The next visit of Charlemagne to Rome was in the year 800—both in the magnificent displays by which

\* A.D. 569 to A. D. 774.

† This was in the royal visit of 780-1.



it was attended, and still more in its consequences, the most important of all the rest. In the first place, there were overtures for a union of the East and West, to be brought about by the marriage of Charlemagne and the Empress Irene, under whose reign the reconciliation of the Greeks with the holy see had been effected. In the next place, there came ambassadors to Rome, from Aaron the Caliph of the Saracens, whose vast empire extended as far as India. We are told by Eginard, that he esteemed the monarch of the Franks more than all other potentates of his time, and, in testimony of his friendship, sent him, besides other presents remarkable for their singularity and splendour, *the keys of Jerusalem*, in token that to him and his successors he granted the sovereignty of the holy city.\* But the conferring of the imperial crown on Charlemagne was that which deserved to be ranked as the characteristic event, not only of the royal visit, but of the age. According to Eginard, who had the best opportunity of being correctly informed, this was an "ex proprio motu" proceeding on the part of Leo. He tells us that he heard Charlemagne make solemn protestation, that, even great as was the festival, he should not have gone to St. Peter's on that Christmas day, had he been aware of the pope's intention. Thus it is, that we again behold the hand of Providence bringing about, through the successors of the fisherman, its greatest designs; for it is impossible to overrate the importance of this event, apparently more the result of accident than of any preconceived design. Not only was it conducive to the well-being of the western nations, but it would

\* Vid. Eginard. in vit. Caroli M.; also the Saxon poet apud Du Chesne, tom. ii. Rer. Franc. where, after enumerating the presents of the Caliph, he adds:

"Adscribique locum sanctum Hierosolymorum  
Concessit propriæ Caroli semper ditioni."

This donation gave rise to the romance of Turpin, who sends Charlemagne and his paladins to achieve wonders of valour, and encounter all kinds of adventures in the East and in Greece.

appear to be a preliminary without which stability and civil order could not even have a beginning. That hand laid the foundation-stone of modern civilization, that placed the imperial crown upon the brow of Charlemagne ; the unction of sacred chrism, the holy mysteries, the hymns and hallowed acclamations, that marked the ceremony of the coronation before the shrine of St. Peter on the festival of Christ's nativity, were solemnities well worthy the baptism of infant Christendom. Up to that instant nothing but chaos had prevailed among the tribes that had overturned pagan Rome and its empire : if the confusion had been checked for a moment, it was by the mighty genius of one man. This is an axiom in the philosophy of history. Therefore, for the continuance of order, even such as it was in his reign ; for a perseverance in the career of progress upon which this prince had started the aggregation of barbarian tribes, bivouacked, rather than dwelling, between the Elbe and the Ebro, there was no guarantee whatever but the life of the aged monarch. The elements of discord and lawless violence, which it required all his energies to hold in temporary subjection and union, would have broken loose the instant he expired, and scenes of worse anarchy than ever must have ensued. But by the act of the pontiff, the influence and the sanction of Charlemagne's genius were rendered immortal, by being invested in a permanent institution. As if the voice of the people, in this instance, had been truly the voice of that God, "who separated the waters from the waters, till the dry land appeared," that solid firmament, upon which the brilliant and varied universe of European society still reposes, seemed to emerge, for the first time, from the wide waste of anarchy, as the aisles of St. Peter reverberated with the acclamations, by which Charlemagne was hailed, "the crowned of God, the great and pacific emperor."\*

\* As to the justice and legitimacy of this proceeding, there can

be no doubt. First, no previously existing claim was violated, for the claim by conquest acquired by the Greek emperors, the only one to which they had any shadow of pretension, had long ago, and for a variety of reasons, some of which have been stated, become null and void. Secondly, Charlemagne was emperor "*de facto*:" he swayed the sceptre over a greater extent of territory than had belonged to any of the Roman Cæsars from the time the empire was finally partitioned. Besides the Gauls, (extending to the Rhine,) which he inherited by succession from his father Pepin le bref, he had acquired, by conquest, the Spanish territory as far as the Ebro, Piedmont, Lombardy, Istria, Dalmatia, all Pannonia as far as the confines of Bulgaria and Thrace, besides the vast country of Dacia, comprehending Walachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania; and to compensate for the defalcation on the side of Africa and the south of Spain, possessed by the Saracens, he had added to his dominion the immense tracts between the Rhine, the Danube, and the Baltic,—countries that had always proved impervious to the Romans. We are, moreover, informed by Eginard, that he was recognised as their sovereign by the Saxon heptarchs of England, who addressed him by the title of their Lord, styling themselves his servants and subjects. In the third place, it was not the ancient senate and people of Rome, alone, but all the countries and nations just enumerated, that were represented in St. Peter's, when he was proclaimed emperor. We are told by Paulus Emilius (*de Reb. Franc.*) and by several other writers, that Charlemagne was accompanied in this journey to Rome not only by the flower of the French nobility, but by an immense number of the chiefs and princes of all the other nations, Saxons, Burgundians, Tutones, Dalmatians, Bulgarians, with the noblesse of Pannonia, Transylvania, and of various other countries. What further condition could be required to justify the act of the Pope, when, by the august solemnities of the coronation, he embodied, sanctioned, and imparted a most salutary significancy to, the power already wielded *de facto* by Charlemagne?—See Murat. ann. 800; Bar. ann. 800, &c.



## CHAPTER V.

"Nor can it easily pass unnoticed, or be denied by any impartial mind, that the union of Roman dominion was necessary to the spread of religion, and that Rome, as a central point, illuminated and instructed the entire West."—*Niebuhr*.

"The pope did more than occupy the place of the emperors."—*Dunham, Relig. and Intell. Hist. of the Mid. Ages, Cab. Cycl. No. 49.*

THOSE of the Barbarians who were the first to get possession of the Roman empire, are represented, in history, as enjoying themselves somewhat after the fashion of freebooters or banditti, carousing, and giving a loose rein to every ferocious and wild desire, amidst the division of the spoil. They abandoned themselves with all the vehemence of savages to riot in every species of voluptuousness, amidst scenes resembling the garden of Epicurus.\* But while they wallowed in the sink of artificial debaucheries, the fire of martial enterprise became extinguished; and they were overwhelmed in one common ruin with the Roman population that still survived their atrocities, by other nations fresh from the desert. The same orgies were renewed; the same debaucheries, and

"Nationum omnium, quas novimus, nulla victu lautiori gaudebat, quam *Vandali*; rursus nulla avidiori se sustentat, quam *Mauri*. Nam illi, ex quo *Africam* occupaverant, quotidianis omnes balneis, et mensæ conquisitis terrâ marique suavissimis cibis extractæ insueverant. Aureo plerique cultu, et veste medicâ, (sericam appellant hodie,) splendidi, in spectaculis ac ludis *Circensibus*, cæterisque deliciis, præsertim in venatione toti erant. Saltatoribus, aurium oculorumque voluptatibus affluebant, quas homines ex concentibus musicis, et rebus ad aspectum præclarissimis capiunt. Multi in pomariis benignissime atque optime consitis habitabant. Crebra inter illos convivia, et in omni re venerea accurata exercitatio."—*Procop. de Bel. Vandal.*, l. ii. c. 6. It would be easy to quote similar testimonies with respect to the Goths, Franks, Lombards, &c. &c.

grotesque attempts to imitate the refinement and effeminacy of the vanquished, were the preludes to another tragedy;—the irruption of tribes, still more sanguinary and brutalized than their predecessors, rushing in from the forests of Scandinavia and the Scythian wilderness for their share of the plunder.

Even long after the overthrow of the empire, nation after nation, like surges in a tempest, continued to roll in upon the conquered territories,—struggling for the mastery of the soil itself after every thing upon the surface had been swept off. Thus were the populations continually displaced, and huddled together in horrible confusion; the few remaining relics of the old Roman race, their refinement, their arts, and, in many countries, their very reminiscences, disappeared. The deluge overwhelmed and absorbed every thing in one common chaos, in which the debris of ancient civilization, manners, opinions, habits, laws, languages were confounded, tainted, and overpowered by the brutality, by the savage ignorance,—in a word, by barbarism,—that medley of whatever is most sanguinary, sensual, and destructive of peace, order, and progress. The delights of a complete exemption from every species of restraint or subordination; to disport them as they listed, with their liberty and their force, in the midst of the chances of the world and of life; the joys of activity without labour; a passion for a destiny full of hazard, of versatility, of sudden surprises, of peril,—such were the predominant sentiments, the moral want, which kept the men of those times in everlasting restlessness; in a condition, in which nothing could be established, nothing that had been fixed could long endure, and in which, property, distinction of classes, of privileges, of estates and kingdoms; of every thing, in fine, with exception of the church, was no sooner founded than subverted, and driven to and fro, in what has been aptly designated the “universal pellmell.”\*

\* Guizot, *Hist. de la Civilizat. &c.* pp. 51 and 74.

We find in this epoch various classes of persons, freemen, ludes, the enfranchised, slaves ; but are the relations of class with class of a character uniform and permanent? Far from it. You will see continually the freeman enter into the service of some noble, accept a gift or a benefice, and thus pass into the class of ludes ; others who sink into the slave class : again, on the other hand, ludes strive to become detached from their patrons, to become independent, and graduate into the class of the free. On all sides, a commotion, a transition from one class to another ; an incertitude and general instability in the mutual bearings of the various ranks, wherein no one holds his position long, and no position continues for any length of time the same. In institutions the same mutability, the same chaos. Even sovereignties are no sooner created than they are suppressed ; many independencies are united, suddenly, into one state, or one state is as suddenly dismembered into many independencies.

Besides these intestine causes of anarchy, in themselves sufficient to prevent the establishment of order, there were others acting from without.

Even under the first race, we see the Frank kings continually called to make war beyond the Rhine : Clothair, Dagobert, incessantly making expeditions into Germany against the Thuringians, Danes, and Saxons, who occupied its right bank. And why ? Because these nations wished to pass the river, not so much to seek their share of the spoil, as to escape from other fiercer tribes who press them on. Whence is it, that the oriental Franks, or those settled in Austrasia, about the same period precipitate themselves on Switzerland, pass the Alps, and enter Italy ? Because they are driven on by new immigrations from the north-east. Their expeditions are not mere razzias for the sake of plunder : they originate in a necessity. Dislodged from the provinces they at first occupied, just as the Goths, in the fourth century, were driven over the Danube by the Huns, they



are forced to look out for new settlements. A new Germanic nation, the Lombards, appears on the scene, and founds a kingdom in Italy. In Gaul, the Frank dynasty changes. Merovingians are displaced by Carolingians. "It is now ascertained," says M. Guizot, "that this change of dynasty was the result of a new invasion, a movement of tribes from Austrasia overpowering the Franks of the west. The transition consummated, it is the second race that is in the ascendant; and the head of the Carolingian commences, against the Saxons, struggles similar to those of the successors of Clovis against the Thuringians. What cause impels the Saxons? The Obotrites, the Wiltzes, the Sorabes, the Bohemians,—all races of the Slavi—who press on the Germanic race, and continually force them, from the sixth to the ninth century, towards the west. Meanwhile, the Arabs invading Spain, a new pressure commences from the south; and the wars of Charlemagne have for object, to keep these two nations from bursting in and overturning and displacing every thing once more. Impossible that the reaction of this double invasion should not have kept, in continual disorder, the interior of the European territory. The populations were displaced incessantly; they no sooner felt a disposition to settle than they were routed: nothing fixed could be established; and in all quarters the nomadic life begins again. No doubt," concludes the same writer, "there was some difference between the various countries, in this respect. The chaos was greater in Germany than in the rest of Europe: there was the source of the confusion; France was more agitated than Italy. But nowhere could society find rest, or organization. Barbarism was everywhere prolonged, by the same causes in which it had its origin."\*

Europe, or rather its embryo, was struggling, nevertheless, and travelling, though with abortive efforts,

\* Hist. de la Civilizat.

to emerge from this state. With all their aversion to restraint or repose, there was still, in the breasts of the barbarians, an instinctive yearning after both. They were tormented by a longing for order, even amidst the anarchy they were so indefatigable in creating. The fragments of those mighty structures,—aqueducts, towns, bridges, highways, the ruins of marble cities, villas, and temples, amongst which they pastured their flocks and herds, disposed their ambuscades in war, or pursued the pleasures of the chase,—all these memorials were haunted, even for them, with certain vague imaginings, perhaps of admiration or wonder, concerning the order of things to which they had belonged. The same might be said of the relics of Roman society, and of its shattered institutions. The very name of the empire, the recollections of this grand and glorious society, agitated the memories of men. With the senators of ancient cities, with the clergy, with all, in short, who had their origin in the Roman world, these retrospects were accompanied by regrets as intense, as the cruelties and insults they were made to suffer, at the hands of their brutalized and ferocious conquerors. Even the conquerors, themselves, were attached to similar reminiscences by their most darling passions. The image of its greatness was often brought before their excited imaginations, while they listened to the bards, who were wont to celebrate, amidst the carousal, the achievements and the prowess of their sires, who had figured in its wars, in its triumphs, but, above all, in its destruction. The consequence was inevitable. By thus frequently contemplating the image of this august order of things, their understandings, rude as they were, could not fail to be struck with the glaring defects and inferiority of their own condition. They became sensible, that, belonging to the empire among the ruins of which they found themselves, there was a something which they had need to imitate, to reproduce. Hence the effect of that stroke of policy which revived the empire of the west. On

the barbarian world, its effect was magical. Those dull instincts and imaginings, so abortive hitherto, and so wide of any definite aim, became, on the instant, so many powerful and concordant rudiments of stability. The idea, the project, that had been harassing the breasts of all, like a night-mare vision, but which no one had power to realize, was recognised and hailed by all with acclamations the moment it was presented to them, in the person of their mighty hero, "crowned of God the great and pacific emperor of the Romans."

From that hour the barbarian tribes acquired a new relation,—one that attached them all, simultaneously, to a grand idea of general and permanent association. This was the beginning of modern Europe. All the consequences involved in this new form given to the social elements did not make their appearance, of course, either suddenly, or all together; but, unquestionably, it was the means of saving the immense countries which the genius of Charlemagne had reduced to some sort of order, from being immediately torn asunder by dismemberment, after his demise; from being overwhelmed, once more, by the double tide of invasion setting in from the south and the north-east. No sooner were barriers established against any further influx from those quarters, than the agitations of the interior countries began to subside. By degrees, the nomadic life is relinquished; populations begin to settle down in fixed abodes; the limits of states and of properties begin to be recognised; the relations of individuals and of classes are no longer at the mercy of violence and of chance. Such were the advantages which the Providence, that had already turned to so much account whatever belonged to the pagan empire of Rome, knew how to derive from its very name, and the shadow of its former greatness.

But in vain must it have been, that Europe had thus commenced to exist, if the hopes of order and progress were without any thing to depend upon



beyond this attachment to the abstract idea of the empire. Influences of a far more definite, energetic, and practical character, were indispensable to the preservation of the very first rudiments of the social state. "I believe that I am not saying too much," says Guizot, "in affirming that it was by the church Christendom was preserved in those ages; as to the conservative influence of civil government, of law, of opinion, they had, absolutely, no existence: in that very crisis, too, when it is certain that nothing but a society strongly organized, (as was the church,) and governed strongly, could have been able to cope with such disasters, and to come out victorious from such a hurricane." But the organization of the church, or of the great Catholic society of Christians, had been admirably knit together, as we have seen, and made perfect at all points, before the reign of anarchy commenced. "It was the church," continues the same writer, "the church, with its institutions, its hierarchy, its power, that arrayed itself firmly against the internal dissolution of the ancient social order, against barbarism: it conquered the barbarians; it became the link, the medium, the propagating principle, of civilization, between the Roman world and the world of the barbarians."\* Amongst the clergy of this epoch, there were men whose forethought had prepared for every exigency, whose minds were made up upon all questions of morality and of politics,—men of sterling principles, who felt strongly, and were actuated by a vivid desire to propagate what they professed, and to secure its sway. Never have such efforts been made by any other society to act upon surrounding bodies, and to assimilate the exterior world to itself, as by the Christian church, from the fifth to the tenth century. It attacked barbarism on all quarters, in order to civilize, by subduing it;† with its institutions, its magistrates, its power, it made a vigorous stand against the internal dissolution of the

\* Hist. de la Civiliz. en Europe, p. 51, &c.    † Ibid. p. 84.

empire, and against barbarism. It was the church that subdued the barbarians, became the link, the medium, the principle of civilization, between the Roman world and the world of our own times.\*

The bishops and the clergy were forced, by the dissolution of civil authority, and by the calamities of the various cities and towns in which they were located, to take up the office of the magistracy, just as we have seen St. Gregory the Great, and also his immediate successors, compelled to do in Rome. As the Roman empire had been formed out of an immense aggregation of municipalities; it was in its civic institutions that the dissolving mass continued to exhibit the last symptoms of vitality. But it happened, that the "curiales," or municipal officers, wearied out and disheartened by the vexations of despotism and the ruin of their cities, were fallen into despair and apathy; while the bishops and the clerical body, on the contrary, full of life and zeal, naturally offered themselves to encounter every emergency, and to direct affairs. "To reproach them for this," continues M. Guizot, "or to accuse them of usurpation, would be to do them wrong. Nay, it was by a natural course of events that this was brought about; the clergy alone were morally strong and animated; they, therefore, became everywhere powerful. This is the law of the universe."† In every record of those times we are met by the fact, that between the municipal regime of the Romans and that of the middle ages, there is interposed the ecclesiastico-municipal regime; the preponderance of the clergy in civic affairs succeeds that of the ancient municipal functionaries, and precedes the organization of the communes or corporate bodies of modern Europe.

The advantages accruing to the cause of civilization from this combination cannot be overrated. In the first place, it was of immense advantage that there was a moral influence, a force depending entirely

\* Ibid. p. 51.

† Ibid. p. 54.

upon convictions, upon principles of faith and morality, in full play, amidst that deluge of material violence which burst at this epoch upon society. If the Christian church had not existed, the entire world must have been abandoned to brute force exclusively. It alone exercised a moral power. It did more; it entertained, it disseminated, the idea of a rule, of a law superior to all human laws. This dogma,—essential to the amelioration, the well-being, to the very existence of human society,—that paramount to every human ordinance, there is a supreme source of obligation, whether you denominate it reason or right divine, was inculcated by the church.

“While avaricious violence perpetually wandered over the country, reducing the poor to slavery, the rich to poverty; to-day destroying the greatness which it created yesterday; delivering every thing to the chances of a struggle, always imminent and unexpected,—during these scenes it was, that in some famous cities, near the tombs of the saints, in the sanctuary of the churches, the unhappy of every condition, whatever their origin, took refuge;—the Roman despoiled of his lands; the barbarian pursued by the wrath of a king, or the vengeance of an enemy; companies of labourers pursued by bands of robbers; often whole populations, who had no longer laws or magistrates to invoke, who could no where meet with safety or protection. For the defence of this only asylum of the faithful, the bishops had nothing beyond the authority of their characters, expostulations, or censures; to repress ferocious rioters, to inspire the vanquished with energy, they had no weapon but faith. Daily experience proved the inadequacy of their means; their riches excited envy; their resistance, wrath; frequently assaults, gross outrages, followed them even into the sanctuary while celebrating the offices of religion; blood, often that of their clergy, even their own, flowed in the churches. Finally, they exercised the only moral magistracy that survived amidst the wrecks of civi-



lization,—an office the most perilous, beyond all doubt, that ever existed.” \*

Now, the supremacy of the papal see was as indispensable to the preservation of order in the church, to the prevention of ecclesiastical anarchy and dismemberment, as was the church to the maintenance of European society. The tendencies to isolation, to the casting off of restraint and subordination, which were characteristic of the barbarian world around it, did not fail to re-act upon the church. We shall find the next epoch characterised by the struggle between the barbaric influence, on the one side, endeavouring to supersede the ancient canonical discipline, by an ecclesiastical feudalism, and the pontiffs putting forth all their might, on the other side, to resist the invasion and conserve unity. It is now admitted that church government, without the institution of the papacy, must have shared the fate of every other government during this epoch of transition. It alone held Christian society together ; in other words, it alone preserved Catholicity.

“ However hostile we may feel in the abstract to some pretensions of the papal see, we are constrained to acknowledge,” says a modern writer, “ that they were often exerted for good ; and that its interference was loudly demanded, not merely by policy, but by necessity. When religion itself was menaced, and where bishops or kings were too powerless or too corrupt to apply a remedy, what authority other than that of the pope—of a dignitary inaccessible to local prejudices and passions—could be invoked with effect ? That such authority was salutarily exercised, appears from the difference between the state of the Gallic church at two important periods—the eighth and the tenth centuries. At the former, we perceive perpetual struggles between bishops and their clergy, between seculars and regulars, between church and state. We everywhere perceive claims actively hos-

\* Guizot, *Hist. Eccl. Franc.* Trad.

tile to each other, rights undefined, open violence and confusion. Charlemagne certainly expelled many of the existing abuses; under his reign the metropolitans again obtained consideration, and councils were frequently convoked; in fact, many of his capitularies relate as much to the government of the church as to that of the state. During the seventh century, scarcely twenty councils, or one in five years, were held in all Gaul; in the forty-six years of his reign he held thirty-three. How well the example was imitated by his immediate successors, is proved by the fact, that under Louis le Débonnaire were held twenty-nine; and from that period to the accession of Hugh-Capet, fifty-six.

“Most of these councils were convoked by the advice of the pope; in some cases he himself prepared the canons; in most they were drawn up in conformity with his instructions. The result was not indeed an extirpation of all abuses, but a harmony which had not been experienced since the time of the Christian emperors of Rome. During this period the liturgy was improved; an uniform service rendered obligatory; penitentials, or canonical penalties for offences, drawn up; and books of homilies were multiplied to a great extent. The secular clergy, whose irregularities had been a scandal to their flocks, were subjected to a new and severe discipline; like the monks, they were taught to live in community, according to a rule devised by St. Chrodogand, bishop of Metz, and from this time the lives of the secular clergy became much purer. From the eighth to the tenth century the papal interference was highly salutary; it led, more than any other cause, to the reformation of the church.”\*

It is to the popes that the world is indebted for the great fountain and guarantee of civilization and social happiness—the sanctity of Christian marriage. They were the champions of the weaker sex, and

\* Europe in the Middle Ages; vol. ii. p. 162, 167.

made a determined and successful stand against polygamy, which of itself ought to endear the institution to humanity. In these contests, the holy see frequently had bishops, even episcopal synods, opposed to it.

“Soon after his marriage with Theutberga, Lothair, king of Lorrain, took so great an aversion to her, that he expelled her from his palace, charging her with most odious crimes in order to palliate his tyrannical cruelty. Though there was no foundation for the accusation brought against her, the Gallic prelates, convened in synod for the purpose, were obsequious enough to condemn this injured queen: nay, amidst the persecution that surrounded her, she was constrained to condemn herself. Three councils, convoked expressly for the purpose, confirmed the sentence, and permitted the king to marry his mistress, Walrada. Nay, even the legates whom Nicolas I. sent to preside over the affair in the council of Metz in 863, were persuaded to affirm the same sentence. The matter seemed finally settled; but Nicolas, who easily penetrated its truth, had courage to stand forth as the protector of innocence, in opposition to a powerful monarch. By his own authority he annulled the acts of the council, deposed the archbishops of Treves and Cologne, who had presided in them, and commanded Lothair to recall his wife. The pope triumphed over bishops, councils, and king,—a most decisive and irrefragable proof of his authority.”\*

Thus do we find the rock upon which the church was founded to be the first nucleus of Christendom: the immoveable centre which first attracted round it, whatever in that wild era of chaotic transition had any affinities for order and stability. At a time, when civil governments had not yet been organized, when of the great political sanctions by which society is kept combined, braced in its energies, and regulated in their exercise, there was hardly any symptom,

\* Dunham, *Relig. and Intel. Hist. of Europe in the Mid. Ages*, &c. p. 166.



the voice of an aged man, possessed of none but a purely moral power, is listened to with docility. The dread of his resentment struck terror into the breasts of the most impious: and the threat of his malediction was the last and strongest rampart which weakness could oppose to the rapacity of power. The clergy of each church, the monks of each convent, sought to shelter themselves under his protection: and the most potent monarchs, sensible that their authority was confined within the narrow limits of their own lives, solicited in favour of their religious foundations, the interference of a sovereignty, whose influence was believed to extend to the most distant ages.\*

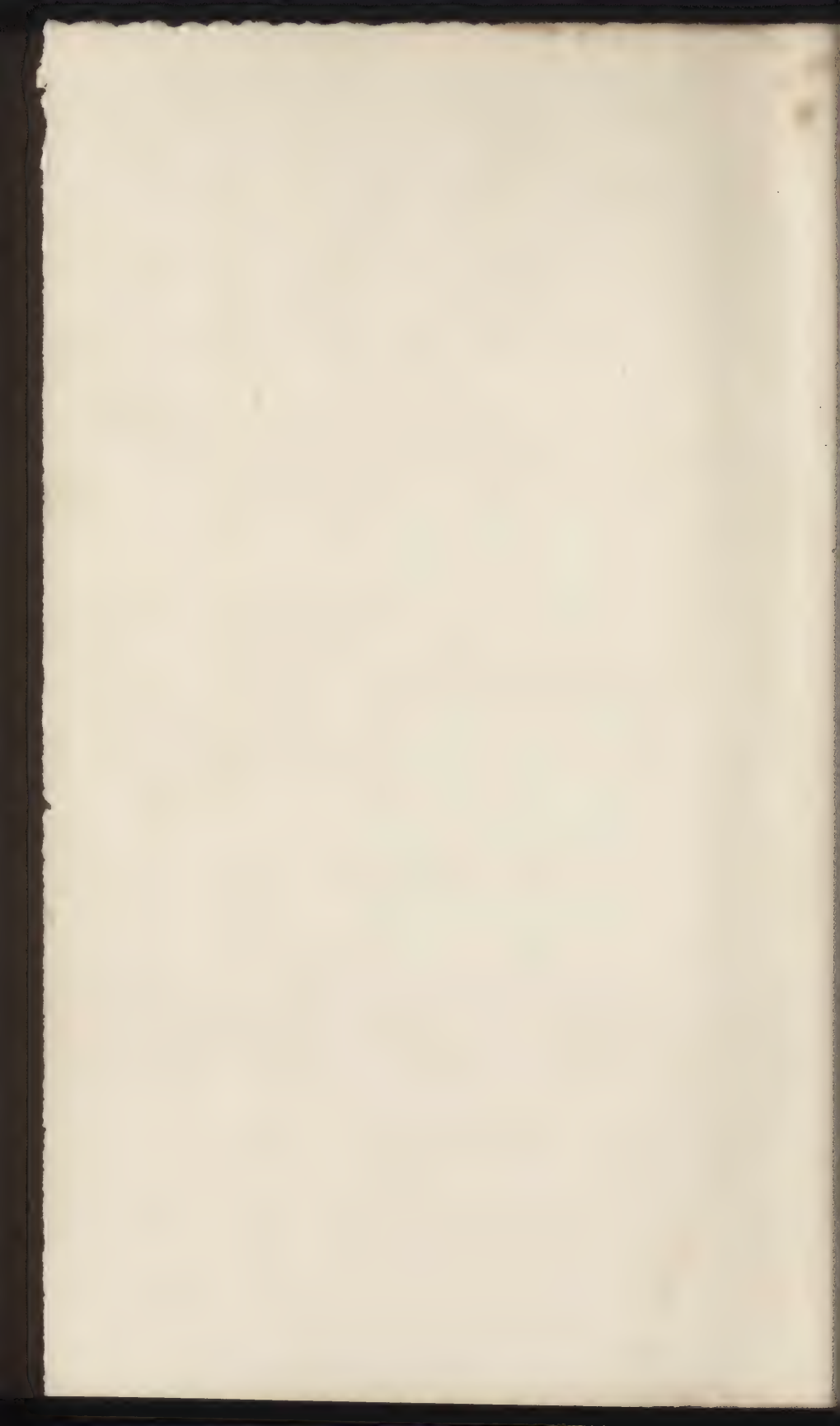
We have seen two dynasties enter into conflict within the walls of Rome. The one,—that of the Cæsars,—was standing, when the conflict commenced, upon the highest pinnacle of human grandeur, armed with all the forces of this world: the other,—that of a Jewish fisherman,—was seeking in vain to shelter itself in crypts and caverns among the relics of the dead; but, instead of being crushed and annihilated by the strokes dealt down upon its undefended head, during three centuries of the most direful persecution, this dynasty of the catacombs continues to graduate in power, serenely, and uninterruptedly, until it is beheld enthroned in the palace of the Roman emperors,—feared, venerated, implicitly obeyed, and, in every respect, looked up to with child-like docility and affection, by the atrocious, brutalized, and indomitable barbarians, who had utterly subverted the empire of the Cæsars, and involved the ancient social world in a chaos, that appeared irremediable, until, under the auspices of the same dynasty, it started into Christendom.

Than all this,—though the most pregnant and impressive FACT in history,—nothing more natural, more inevitable, can be imagined, provided the Divine pro-

\* See Dr. Lingard, Ang.-Sax. Antiq. p. 157, et seq.

mises and prophecies be interpreted, as they have been in these volumes, according to the dictates of common sense: but if viewed in any other light, it will be found impossible to save the Divine veracity, without denying FACTS, not only recorded in the annals and traditions of all civilized nations, but registered in MONUMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS that seem to be as imperishable as the earth itself.\*

\* "Reges urbes everterunt, portus exstruxerunt, et, nominibus suis inscriptis, decesserunt; nec tamen eis quicquam profuit, sed silentio et oblivioni dati sunt. Piscator autem Petrus, qui nihil fecit eorum, quoniam virtutem est prosecutus, et civitatem maxime regiam occupavit, etiam post mortem resplendet, sole clarius."—*S. Joan. Chrysost. Hom. in Ps. xlviii.*





## APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX.

### APPENDIX A.

*Concerning the Apocalypse. The precise date of the Revelations made to St. John. Whether it be prudent to seek their interpretation, &c., &c.*

I. WE read in Tertullian, de Præscr. xxxvi., and in St. Irenæus, v. 30, that the apostle St. John, being in Rome during the persecution of Domitian, was, by order of that tyrant, cast into a caldron of boiling oil; he came out, however, uninjured from this ordeal, and was then transported to the Isle of Patmos. It was during his exile there, that he was favoured with those heavenly visions, of which there is question: "I, John," he says, "who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."\* The precise time of the Revelation, we may conclude, from what St. Irenæus says, to have been somewhere in the year of our Lord ninety-five or ninety-six; for he mentions, that it was towards the close of Domitian's reign that the Apocalypse, or Revelation, was seen by the holy Evangelist.† Domitian reigned from A.D. 81, to A.D. 96. This testimony of St. Irenæus must be received as decisive, when we consider how near he was to the times when these events occurred, and how incomparable were the opportunities he had of becoming acquainted, through his beloved master, St. Polycarp, with every thing concerning *his* preceptor in Christianity, St. John.‡ It is to be regretted that this correct date escaped the notice of both Grotius and Hammond. They went on the erroneous supposition, that the exile of St. John took place in the reign of Claudius, and thus became embarrassed in their applications of the prophecy.

II. So much for the date of the prophecy: what of the prudence of attempting to interpret it?

"It has frequently struck me," says Bossuet, "that persons smile whenever there is any question of Apocalyptic interpretations: attempts of the kind seem to be regarded as vain, as little short of contemptible; it being taken for granted, that nothing certain can

\* Ch. i. ver. 9.

† Iren. adv. Hæc. ver. 2.

‡ See App. B.



possibly be elicited from that most Divine of prophecies, or that the events to which it has reference are not to take place till the end of the world. This is a conclusion quite at variance with what would appear to be a general law with respect to the prophecies; for as Jeremias, Ezekiel, Daniel, and other Divinely-inspired prophets of the old dispensation, predicted the destinies of Babylon, by which they and their brethren of God's people were oppressed, so it was meet that St. John should foretell the destruction of that city and empire, by which the church of Christ was so cruelly persecuted, and the holy apostle himself afflicted and consigned to banishment. Hence, he depicts in its proper colours, and designates by its characteristic features, that imperial Rome, so illustrious and formidable for its power; than which, no city more impious towards the Almighty ever existed, or more truculent towards the Christians. He pursues it until it is laid in ruins, and sounds over it thus prostrate that triple 'woe,' which he had heard from the angel that 'flew through the midst of heaven,' ch. viii. ver. 13, and ch. xviii. ver. 10, 16, 19. Thus fell that queen of cities, and with it the empire of Satan, and the idol worship, which it sustained, were destroyed; thus was 'the prince of this world cast out;' and that other prediction of our Lord was fulfilled, in which he said: 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself.' In the visions revealed to St. John, in Patmos, he is made to behold the approaching triumph of the cross, predicted in these words, which he himself had recorded in his gospel: he is warned not to seal the prophecy, 'because the time is at hand,'\*—the time of its fulfilment."†

"It is easy to understand," says the same illustrious writer, "how great must have been the utility of this admirable prophecy, even at a time when its meaning was not so clear, as after the occurrence of the events. For example, must it not have proved a great consolation to the faithful in the midst of their trials, to see what power and influence were assigned to those who suffered for Christ, and to discover, albeit indistinctly, the magnificence, not only of their future glory in heaven, but also of that terrestrial triumph that was in store for them? What better calculated to inspire the Christians with contempt for the tyrannical power that oppressed them, than to see its glory extinguished, and its overthrow distinctly pointed out and portrayed in the Divine oracles? Besides, it may be well supposed that the servants of heaven in those days were favoured with special illumination as to the import of these revelations. The oral remarks of the venerable apostle upon the subject, to his immediate disciples, must have become disseminated through the churches, and, no doubt, were handed down from age to age."‡

III. The merits and tendency of those interpretations by which

\* Ch. xxii. ver. 10.

† De Excidio Babylonis, apud S. Joan. Præf. sectio 1<sup>a</sup>. Œuvres de Bossuet, tom. iv. Versailles, 1815.

‡ Præf. sur L'Apocalypse, p. 127, tom. iii. ut supra.

this Divine prophecy has been pressed into the service of the most violent and embittered passions, cannot be better expressed than in the words of the same writer.

“L'Apocalypse est profanée par d'indignes interprétations, qui font trouver l'Antéchrist dans les saints, l'erreur dans leur doctrine, l'idolâtrie dans leur culte. Ou se joue de ce divin livre pour nourrir la haine, et amuser les frivoles espérances d'un peuple crédule et prévenu. Ce n'est pas assez de gemir en secret d'un tel opprobre de l'Eglise et de l'Ecriture : il faut venger les outrages de la chaire de Saint Pierre, dont on veut faire le siège du royaume antichrétien, mais les venger d'une manière digne de Dieu, en repandant des lumières capables de convertir ses ennemis, ou de les confondre.

“L'ouvrage est commencé, et par une disposition particulière de la providence de Dieu, il est commencé par les protestans. Il s'est trouvé dans leur communion des gens d'assez bon sens, pour être las et indignés des contes qu'on y débitoit sur l'Apocalypse ; d'un Antéchrist qui défend contre toutes les hérésies le mystère de Jésus-Christ, qui l'adore de tout son cœur, et qui apprend à mettre son espérance dans son sang ; d'une idolâtrie, où, non-seulement on reconnoît le seul Dieu qui de rien a fait le ciel et la terre, mais encore où tout se termine à le servir seul ; du mystère écrit sur la tiare du pape, et du caractère de la bête, établi dans l'impression de la croix. Ils ont eu honte de voir introduire ces vains fantômes dans les admirables visions de Saint Jean : et ils leur ont donné un sens plus convenable dans la dispersion des Juifs, dans l'histoire des combats de l'Eglise, et dans la chute de Rome précipitée avec tous les dieux et toute son idolâtrie. C'est Grotius et Hammond dont je veux parler,” &c.—*Préface sur l'Apocal.* xxvi. tom. iii.

## APPENDIX B.

### *Apostolical Tradition.*

The subjoined extract from a letter of St. Irenæus, quoted by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History, may assist the reader to form a correct idea of the care and assiduity with which the doctrines and instructions orally delivered by the apostles were preserved, and transmitted from generation to generation, in the primitive church. In writing to one Florinus, who had joined himself with Cardo and Marcion, and was at the time endeavouring to disseminate their errors, St. Irenæus says :—

“These opinions, O Florinus, (that I may speak sparingly,) do not appertain to sound doctrine : these opinions are dissonant from the church, and drive those who give their assent to them into the greatest impiety : these sentiments even the heretics, who are without the church, have not dared to publish at any time : these opi-

nions the presbyters, who lived before our times, who also were the disciples of the apostles, did in no wise deliver unto thee. For I saw thee (when being yet a child I was in the Lower Asia with Polycarp) behaving thyself very well in the palace, and endeavouring to get thyself well esteemed of by him. For I remember the things then done, better than what has happened of late. For what we learned, being children, increases with the mind itself, and is closely united to it. Insomuch, that I am able to tell even the place where the blessed Polycarp sat and discoursed; also his goings-out and comings-in; his manner of life; the shape of his body; the discourses he made to the populace; the familiar converse which, he said, he had with John, and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he rehearsed their sayings, and what they were which he had heard from them concerning the Lord, concerning his miracles and his doctrine. According as Polycarp received them from those who with their own eyes beheld the Word of Life, so he related them, agreeing in all things with the Scriptures. These things by the mercy of God bestowed upon me, I then heard diligently and copied out, not on paper, but on my heart; and by the grace of God, I do continually and sincerely ruminate upon them. And I am able to protest in the presence of God, that if that blessed and apostolic priest should have heard any such thing, (as you, O Florinus, put forth as Christian doctrine,) he would presently have cried out and stopped his ears, and, according to his usual custom, would have said, 'Good God! for what times hast thou reserved me, that I should suffer such things?' And he would have run out of the place where he was either sitting or standing, should he have heard such words as these."—*Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl.* l. v. c. 19.

This is the same Irenæus who bears such unequivocal testimony to the supremacy of the see of Rome and the necessity of being in its communion. "Ad hanc enim ecclesiam (Romanam) propter potentiorum principatatem necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est, eos qui sunt undique fideles: in quâ, semper, ab his qui sunt undique, conservata est ea quæ est ab apostolis traditio."—*S. Iren. Adv. Hær.* l. iii. c. 3.

## APPENDIX C.

### *The Spanish Church.*

The Visigoths, originally followers of Alaric, who had possessed themselves of Spain, continued to adhere to Arianism, as did the remnant of the Vandal and Suevic nations of the same country, up to the close of the sixth century. The Catholics were even cruelly persecuted by King Leovigild, who died A.D. 587. His own son, St. Ermenigild, was amongst his victims. He was succeeded by the brother of this martyr, King Recared, who not only abandoned



heresy himself, but was in a great degree instrumental in the conversion of his people. In the year 599, we find St. Gregory the Great congratulating with him on his devotedness to St. Peter, to whose shrine he had sent rich offerings.\* He sent to the king some holy relics,—a particle of the cross of our Lord, and a portion of the chain with which St. Peter was bound in prison; and to St. Leander, the archbishop of Seville, he sent the pallium. From that period, the entire body of the Spanish nation, the old provincials, the Vandals, Suevi, and Visigoths, (these last mentioned had the ascendancy,) continued firmly and enthusiastically devoted to the Catholic faith and to the see of Peter. "The pope," says Dunham, "was acknowledged as supreme head of the Spanish church; his authority seems to have been exercised in four ways:—1st. In remitting the pall (pallium) to such metropolitans as he considered fit for the honour. 2nd. In deciding on appeals from the ecclesiastical courts. 3rd. In sending pontifical judges into Spain to decide for him, where the nature of the disputes which arose could be best ascertained by an eye-witness. 4th. In nominating legates to watch over the discipline of the national church."†

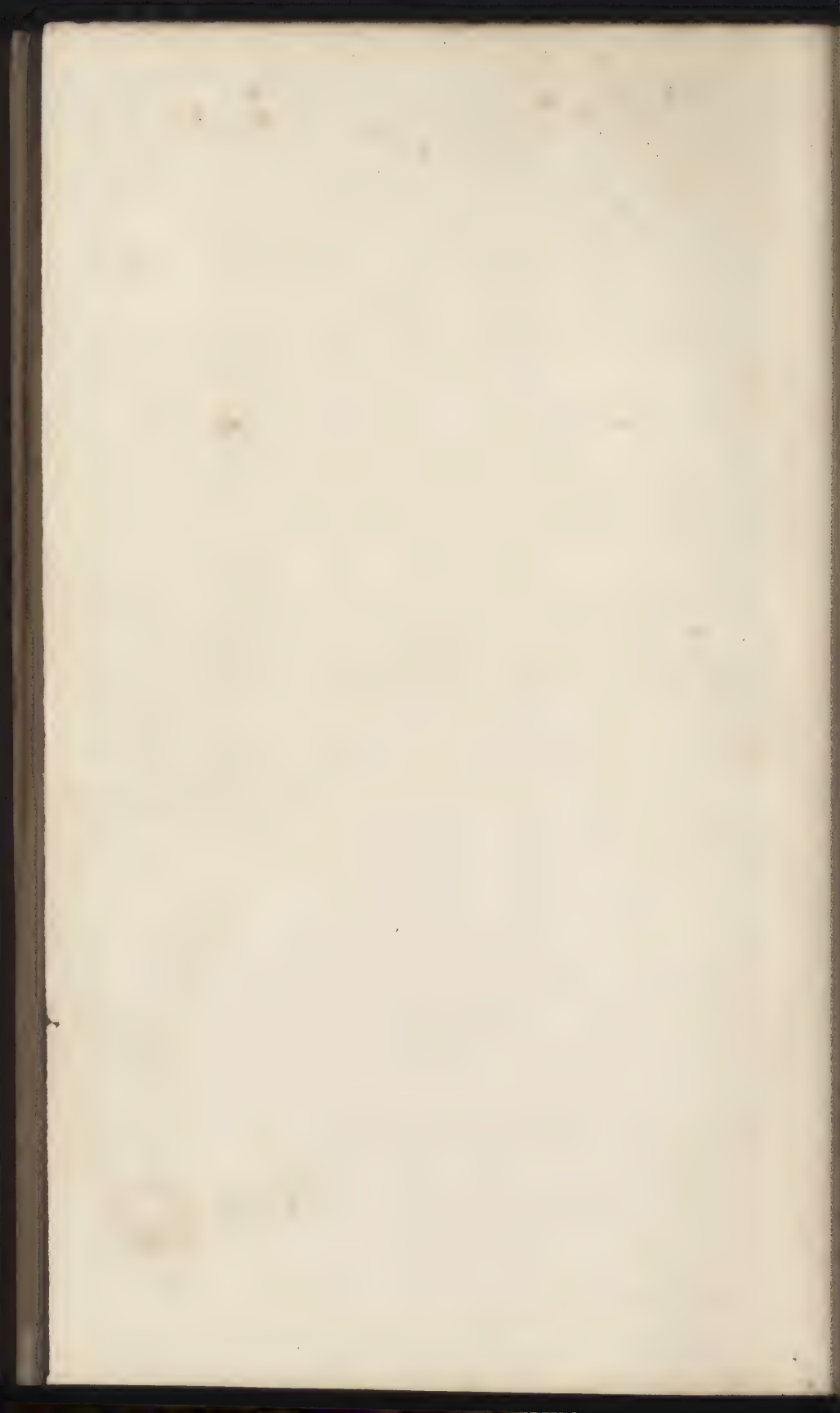
The Visigothic monarchy was overthrown by the Mohammedan invasion, commencing April 30, A.D. 711; but the petty kingdoms which grew up in the fastnesses of the land, and finally expelled the Moors, persevered in Catholicity through unexampled trials and conflicts. "After the restoration," says the same historian, "the pope continued to exercise the same jurisdiction as during the monarchy of the Visigoths."‡ The Muzarabic liturgy, in use among the Catholics who remained in the Mohammedan districts, was superseded by the Roman liturgy during the pontificate of Gregory VII.

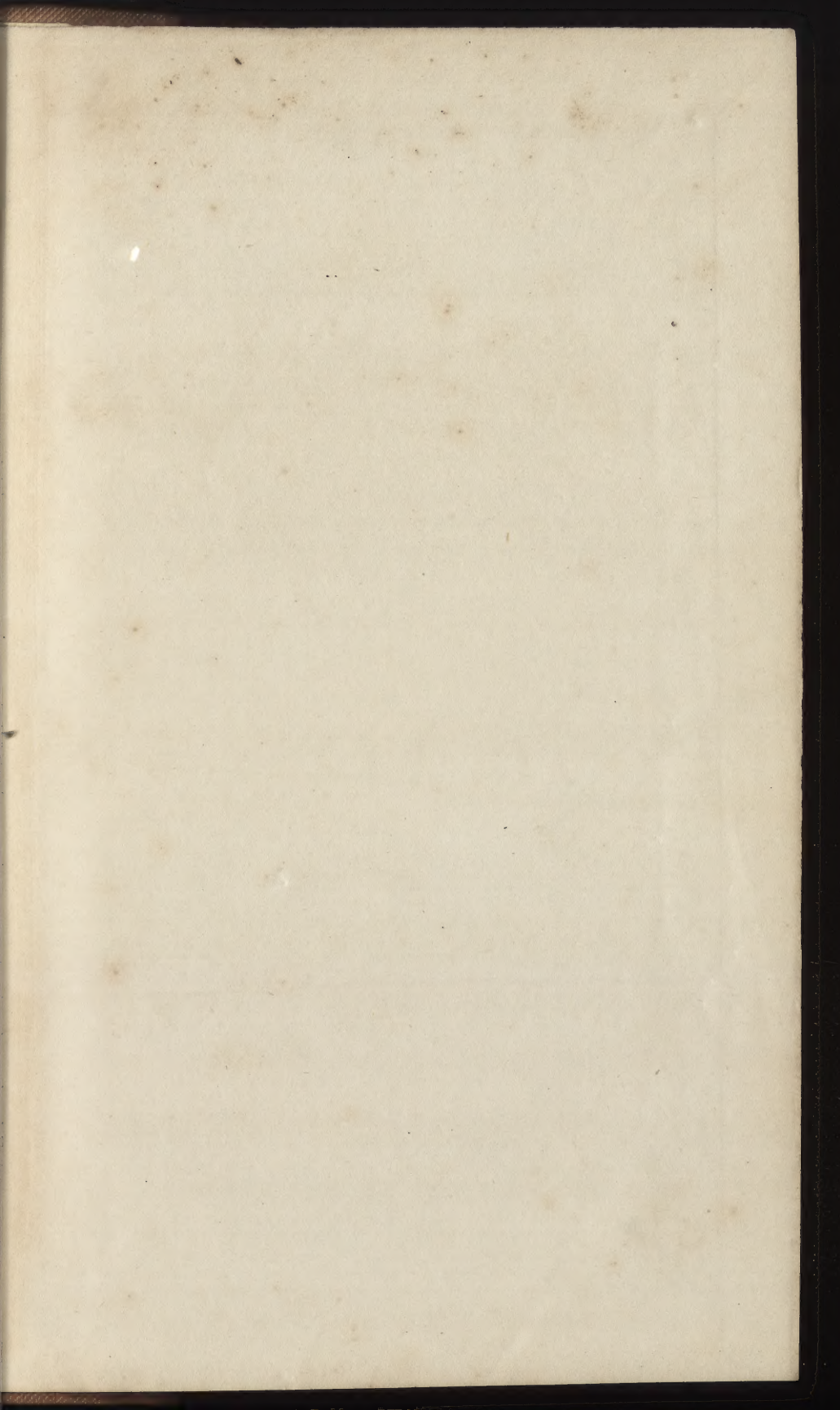
\* Baron. ad Ann. 599, No. 25.

† History of Spain and Portugal, vol. i. p. 196, Cab. Cycl. No. 29.

‡ Ibid. vol. iv. p. 263, No. 35.

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